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THE WITS AND BEAUX OF SOCIETY.

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Front. Beau Fielding and the Sham Widow. Vol. i., p. 103.

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THE

WITS AND BEAUX OF SOCIETY.

BY

GRACE AND PHILIP WHARTON,

AUTHORS OF "THE QUEENS OF SOCIETY."

With Illustrations from Drawings by
H. K. BROWNE AND JAMES GODWIN.

ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON: JAMES HOGG & SONS.

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PREFACE.

THE success of the 'Queens of Society' will have pioneered the way for the 'Wits and Beaux:' with whom, during the holiday time of their lives, these fair ladies were so greatly associated. The 'Queens,' whether all wits or not, must have been the cause of wit in others; their influence over dandyism is notorious: their power to make or mar a man of fashion, almost historical. So far, a chronicle of the sayings and doings of the 'Wits' is worthy to serve as a *pendant* to that of the 'Queens:' happy would it be for society if the annals of the former could more closely resemble the biography of the latter. But it may not be so: men are subject to temptations, to failures, to delinquencies, to calamities, of which women can scarcely dream, and which they can only lament and pity.

Our 'Wits,' too—to separate them from the 'Beaux'—were men who often took an active part in the stirring events of their day; they assumed to be statesmen, though, too frequently, they were only politicians. They were brave and loyal: indeed, in the time of the Stuarts, all the Wits were Cavaliers, as well as the Beaux. One hears of no

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repartee among Cromwell's followers; no dash, no merriment, in Fairfax's staff; eloquence, indeed, but no wit in the Parliamentarians; and, in truth, in the second Charles's time, the king might have headed the list of the Wits himself—such a capital man as his Majesty is known to have been for a wet evening or a dull Sunday; such a famous teller of a story—such a perfect diner-out: no wonder that in his reign we had George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham of that family, 'mankind's epitome,' who had every pretension to every accomplishment combined in himself. No wonder that we could attract De Grammont and Saint Evremond to our court; and own, somewhat to our discredit be it allowed, Rochester and Beau Fielding. Every reign has had its wits, but those in Charles's time were so numerous as to distinguish the era by an especial brilliancy. Nor let it be supposed that these annals do not contain a moral application. They show how little the sparkling attributes herein pourtrayed conferred happiness; how far more the rare, though certainly real touches of genuine feeling and strong affection, which appear here and there even in the lives of the most thoughtless 'Wits and Beaux,' elevate the character in youth, or console the spirit in age. They prove how wise has been that change in society which now repudiates the 'Wit' as a distinct class; and requires general intelligence as a compensation for lost repartees, or long obsolete practical jokes.

'Men are not all evil:' so in the life of George Villiers, we find him kind-hearted, and free from hypocrisy. His old

servants—and the fact speaks in extenuation of one of our wildest Wits and Beaux—loved him faithfully. De Grammont, we all own, has little to redeem him except his good-nature: Rochester's latest days were almost hallowed by his penitence. Chesterfield is saved by his kindness to the Irish, and his affection for his son. Horace Walpole had human affections, though a most inhuman pen: and Wharton was famous for his good-humour.

The periods most abounding in the Wit and the Beau have, of course, been those most exempt from wars, and rumours of wars. The Restoration; the early period of the Augustan age; the commencement of the Hanoverian dynasty,—have all been enlivened by Wits and Beaux, who came to light like mushrooms after a storm of rain, as soon as the political horizon was clear. We have Congreve, who affected to be the Beau as well as the Wit; Lord Hervey, more of the courtier than the Beau—a Wit by inheritance—a peer, assisted into a pre-eminent position by royal preference, and consequent *prestige;* and all these men were the offspring of the particular state of the times in which they figured: at earlier periods, they would have been deemed effeminate; in later ones, absurd.

Then the scene shifts: intellect had marched forward gigantically: the world is grown exacting, disputatious, critical, and such men as Horace Walpole and Brinsley Sheridan appear; the characteristics of wit which adorned that age being well diluted by the feebler talents of Selwyn and Hook.

Of these, and others, '*table traits*,' and other traits, are here given: brief chronicles of *their* life's stage, over which a curtain has so long been dropped, are supplied carefully from well-established sources: it is with characters, not with literary history, that we deal; and do our best to make the portraitures life-like, and to bring forward old memories, which, without the stamp of antiquity, might be suffered to pass into obscurity.

Your Wit and your Beau, be he French or English, is no mediæval personage: the aristocracy of the present day rank among his immediate descendants: he is a creature of a modern and an artificial age; and with his career are mingled many features of civilized life, manners, habits, and traces of family history which are still, it is believed, interesting to the majority of English readers, as they have long been to

GRACE and PHILIP WHARTON.

October, 1860.

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GEORGE VILLIERS,
SECOND DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

GEORGE VILLIERS,
SECOND DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Sᴀᴍuel Pepys, the weather-glass of his time, hails the first glimpse of the Restoration of Charles II. in his usual quaint terms and vulgar sycophancy.

'To Westminster Hall,' says he; 'where I heard how the Parliament had this day dissolved themselves, and did pass very cheerfully through the Hall, and the Speaker without his mace. The whole Hall was joyful thereat, as well as themselves; and now they begin to talk loud of the king.' And the evening was closed, he further tells us, with a large bonfire in the Exchange, and people called out, 'God bless King Charles!'

This was in March 1660; and during that spring Pepys was noting down how he did not think it possible that 'my Lord Protector,' Richard Cromwell, should come into power again: how there were great hopes of the king's arrival; how Monk, the Restorer, was feasted at Mercers' Hall; (Pepys's own especial); how it was resolved that a treaty be offered to the king, privately; how he resolved to go to sea with 'my lord;' and how, while they lay at Gravesend, the great affair which brought back Charles Stuart was virtually accomplished. Then, with various parentheses, inimitable in their way, Pepys

carries on his narrative. He has left his father's 'cutting-room' to take care of itself; and finds his cabin little, though his bed is convenient, but is certain, as he rides at anchor with 'my lord,' in the ship, that the king 'must of necessity come in,' and the vessel sails round and anchors in Lee Roads. 'To the castles about Deal, where *our* fleet' (*our fleet*, the saucy son of a tailor!) 'lay and anchored; great was the shoot of guns from the castles, and ships, and our answers.' Glorious Samuel! in his element, to be sure.

Then the wind grew high: he began to be 'dizzy and squeamish;' nevertheless employed 'Lord's Day' in looking through the lieutenant's glass at two good merchantmen, and the women in them, 'being pretty handsome;' then in the afternoon he first saw Calais, and was pleased, though it was at a great distance. All eyes were looking across the Channel just then—for the king was at Flushing; and, though the 'Fanatiques' still held their heads up high, and the Cavaliers also talked high on the other side, the cause that Pepys was bound to still gained ground.

Then 'they begin to speak freely of King Charles;' churches in the City, Samuel declares, were setting up his arms; merchant-ships—more important in those days—were hanging out his colours. He hears, too, how the Mercers' Company were making a statue of his gracious Majesty, to set up in the Exchange. Ah! Pepys's heart is merry; he has forty shillings (some shabby perquisite) given him by Captain Cowes of the 'Paragon;' and 'my lord' in the evening 'falls to singing' a song upon the Rump to the tune of the 'Blacksmith.'

The hopes of the Cavalier party are hourly increasing, and those of Pepys we may be sure also; for Pim, the tailor, spends a morning in his cabin 'putting a great many ribbons to a sail.' And the king is to be brought over suddenly, 'my lord' tells him: and indeed it looks like it, for the sailors are drinking Charles's health in the streets of Deal, on their

knees; 'which, methinks,' says Pepys, 'is a little too much;' and 'methinks' so, worthy Master Pepys, also.

Then, how the news of the Parliamentary vote of the king's declaration was received! Pepys becomes eloquent.

'He that can fancy a fleet (like ours) in her pride, with pendants loose, guns roaring, caps flying, and the loud "*Vive le Roi!*" echoed from one ship's company to another; he, and he only, can apprehend the joy this inclosed vote was received with, or the blessing he thought himself possessed of that bore it.'

Next, orders come for 'my lord' to sail forthwith to the king; and the painters and tailors set to work, Pepys superintending, 'cutting out some pieces of yellow cloth in the fashion of a crown and C. R.; and putting it upon a fine sheet'—and that is to supersede the States' arms, and is finished and set up. And the next day, on May 14, the Hague is seen plainly by *us*, 'my lord going up in his night-gown into the cuddy.'

And then they land at the Hague; some 'nasty Dutchmen' come on board to offer their boats, and get money, which Pepys does not like; and in time they find themselves in the Hague, 'a most neat place in all respects:' salute the Queen of Bohemia and the Prince of Orange—afterwards William III.—and find at their place of supper nothing but a 'sallet' and two or three bones of mutton provided for ten of us, 'which was very strange.' Nevertheless, on they sail, having returned to the fleet, to Schevelling; and, on the 23rd of the month, go to meet the king; who, 'on getting into the boat, did kiss my lord with much affection.' And 'extraordinary press of good company,' and great mirth all day, announced the Restoration. Nevertheless Charles's clothes had not been, till this time, Master Pepys is assured, worth forty shillings—and he, as a connoisseur, was scandalized at the fact.

And now, before we proceed, let us ask who worthy

Samuel Pepys was, that he should pass such stringent comments on men and manners? His origin was lowly; his family ancient; his father having followed, until the Restoration, the calling of a tailor. Pepys, vulgar as he was, had nevertheless received an university education; first entering Trinity College, Cambridge, as a sizar. To our wonder we find him marrying furtively and independently; and his wife, of fifteen, was glad with her husband to take up an abode in the house of a relative, Sir Edward Montagu, afterwards Earl of Sandwich, the 'my lord' under whose shadow Samuel Pepys dwelt in reverence. By this nobleman's influence Pepys for ever left the 'cutting-room;' he acted first as Secretary, (always as toad-eater, one would fancy,) then became a clerk in the Admiralty; and as such went, after the Restoration, to live in Seething Lane, in the parish of St. Olave, Hart Street—and in St. Olave his mortal part was ultimately deposited.

So much for Pepys. See him now, in his full-bottomed wig, and best cambric neckerchief, looking out for the king and his suite, who are coming on board the 'Nazeby.'

'Up, and made myself as fine as I could, with the linning stockings on, and wide canons that I bought the other day at the Hague.' So began he the day. 'All day nothing but lords and persons of honour on board, that we were exceeding full. Dined in great deal of state, the royalle company by themselves in the coache, which was a blessed sight to see.' This royal company consisted of Charles, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, his brothers, the Queen of Bohemia, the Princess Royal, the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III.—all of whose hands Pepys kissed, after dinner. The King and Duke of York changed the names of the ships. The 'Rumpers,' as Pepys calls the Parliamentarians, had given one the name of the 'Nazeby;' that was now christened the 'Charles;' 'Richard' was changed into 'James.' The 'Speaker' into 'Mary,' the 'Lambert' was 'Henrietta,' and so on. How

merry the king must have been whilst he thus turned the Roundheads, as it were, off the ocean; and how he walked here and there, up and down (quite contrary to what Samuel Pepys 'expected'), and fell into discourse of his escape from Worcester, and made Samuel 'ready to weep' to hear of his travelling four days and three nights on foot, up to his knees in dirt, with 'nothing but a green coat and pair of breeches on,' (worse and worse, thought Pepys,) and a pair of country shoes that made his feet sore; and how, at one place, he was made to drink by the servants, to show he was not a Roundhead; and how, at another place—and Charles, the best teller of a story in his own dominions, may here have softened his tone—the master of the house, an innkeeper, as the king was standing by the fire, with his hands on the back of a chair, kneeled down and kissed his hand 'privately,' saying he could not ask him who he was, but bid 'God bless him, where he was going!'

Then, rallying after this touch of pathos, Charles took his hearers over to Fecamp, in France—thence to Rouen, where, he said, in his easy, irresistible way, 'I looked so poor that the people went into the rooms before I went away, to see if I had not stolen something or other.'

With what reverence and sympathy did our Pepys listen! but he was forced to hurry off to get Lord Berkeley a bed; and with 'much ado' (as one may believe) he did get 'him to bed with my Lord Middlesex;' so, after seeing these two peers of the realm in that undignified predicament—two in a bed—'to my cabin again,' where the company were still talking of the king's difficulties, and how his Majesty was fain to eat a piece of bread and cheese out of a poor body's pocket; and, at a Catholic house, how he lay a good while 'in the Priest's Hole, for privacy.'

In all these hairbreadth escapes—of which the king spoke with infinite humour and good feeling—one name was perpetually introduced:—George—George Villiers, *Villers*, as the

royal narrator called him; for the name was so pronounced formerly. And well he might; for George Villiers had been his playmate, classfellow, nay, bedfellow sometimes, in priests' holes; their names, their haunts, their hearts, were all assimilated; and misfortune had bound them closely to each other. To George Villiers let us now turn; he is waiting for his royal master on the other side of the Channel—in England. And a strange character have we to deal with:—

> 'A man so various, that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
> But, in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.'*

Such was George Villiers: the Alcibiades of that age. Let us trace one of the most romantic, and brilliant, and unsatisfactory lives that has ever been written.

George Villiers was born at Wallingford House, in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, on the 30th January, 1627. The Admiralty now stands on the site of the mansion in which he first saw the light. His father was George Villiers, the favourite of James I. and Charles I.; his mother, the Lady Katherine Manners, daughter and heiress of Francis, Earl of Rutland. Scarcely was he a year old, when the assassination of his father, by Felton, threw the affairs of his family into confusion. His mother, after the Duke of Buckingham's death, gave birth to a son, Francis; who was, subsequently, savagely killed by the Roundheads, near Kingston. Then the Duchess of Buckingham very shortly married again, and uniting herself to Randolph Macdonald, Earl of Antrim, became a rigid Catholic. She was therefore lost to her children, or rather, they were lost to her; for King Charles I.,

* Dryden.

who had promised to be a 'husband to her, and a father to her children,' removed them from her charge, and educated them with the royal princes.

The youthful peer soon gave indications of genius; and all that a careful education could do, was directed to improve his natural capacity under private tutors. He went to Cambridge; and thence, under the care of a preceptor named Aylesbury, travelled into France. He was accompanied by his young, handsome, fine-spirited brother, Francis; and this was the sunshine of his life. His father had indeed left him, as his biographer Brian Fairfax expresses it, 'the greatest name in England; his mother, the greatest estate of any subject.' With this inheritance there had also descended to him the wonderful beauty, the matchless grace, of his ill-fated father. Great abilities, courage, fascination of manners, were also his; but he had not been endowed with firmness of character, but was at once energetic and versatile. Even at this age, the qualities which became his ruin were clearly discoverable.

George Villiers was recalled to England by the troubles which drove the King to Oxford, and which converted that academical city into a garrison, its under-graduates into soldiers, its ancient halls into barrack-rooms. Villiers was on this occasion entered at Christ Church: the youth's best feelings were aroused, and his loyalty was engaged to one to whom his father owed so much. He was now a young man of twenty-one years of age—able to act for himself; and he went heart and soul into the cause of his sovereign. Never was there a gayer, a more prepossessing Cavalier. He could charm even a Roundhead. The harsh and Presbyterian-minded Bishop Burnet, has told us that 'he was a man of a noble presence; had a great liveliness of wit, and a peculiar faculty of turning everything into ridicule, with bold figures and natural descriptions.' How invaluable he must have been in the Common-rooms at Oxford, then turned into guard-rooms, his

eye upon some unlucky volunteer Don, who had put off his clerkly costume for a buff jacket, and could not manage his drill. Irresistible as his exterior is declared to have been, the original mind of Villiers was even far more influential. De Grammont tells us, 'he was extremely handsome, but still thought himself much more so than he really was; although he had a great deal of discernment, yet his vanities made him mistake some civilities as intended for his person which were only bestowed on his wit and drollery.'

But this very vanity, so unpleasant in an old man, is only amusing in a younger wit. Whilst thus a gallant of the court and camp, the young nobleman proved himself to be no less brave than witty. Juvenile as he was, with a brother still younger, they fought on the royalist side at Lichfield, in the storming of the Cathedral Close. For thus allowing their lives to be endangered, their mother blamed Lord Gerard, one of the Duke's guardians; whilst the Parliament seized the pretext of confiscating their estates, which were afterwards returned to them, on account of their being under age at the time of confiscation. The youths were then placed under the care of the Earl of Northumberland, by whose permission they travelled in France and Italy, where they appeared—their estates having been restored—with princely magnificence. Nevertheless, on hearing of the imprisonment of Charles I. in the Isle of Wight, the gallant youths returned to England, and joined the army under the Earl of Holland, who was defeated near Nonsuch, in Surrey.

A sad episode in the annals of these eventful times is presented in the fate of the handsome, brave Francis Villiers. His murder, for one can call it by no other name, shows how keenly the personal feelings of the Roundheads were engaged in this national quarrel. Under most circumstances, Englishmen would have spared the youth, and respected the gallantry of the free young soldier, who, planting himself against an oak-tree which grew in the road, refused to ask for

quarter, but defended himself against several assailants. But the name of Villiers was hateful in Puritan ears. 'Hew them down, root and branch!' was the sentiment that actuated the soldiery. His very loveliness exasperated their vengeance. At last, 'with nine wounds on his beautiful face and body,' says Fairfax, 'he was slain.' 'The oak-tree,' writes the devoted servant, 'is his monument,' and the letters of F. V. were cut in it in his day. His body was conveyed by water to York House, and was entombed with that of his father, in the Chapel of Henry VII.

His brother fled towards St. Neot's, where he encountered a strange kind of peril. Tobias Rustat attended him; and 'was with him in the rising in Kent for King Charles I., wherein the Duke was engaged; and they, being put to the flight, the Duke's helmet, by a brush under a tree, was turned upon his back, and tied so fast with a string under his throat, 'that without the present help of T. R.,' writes Fairfax, 'it had undoubtedly choked him, as I have credibly heard.'*

Whilst at St. Neot's, the house in which Villiers had taken refuge was surrounded with soldiers. He had a stout heart, and a dexterous hand; he took his resolution; rushed out upon his foes, killed the officer in command, galloped off and joined the Prince in the Downs.

The sad story of Charles I. was played out; but Villiers remained stanch, and was permitted to return and to accompany Prince Charles into Scotland. Then came the battle of Worcester in 1651: there Charles II. showed himself a worthy descendant of James IV. of Scotland. He resolved to

* The day after the battle at Kingston, the Duke's estates were confiscated (8th July, 1648).—Nichols' History of Leicestershire, iii. 213; who also says that the Duke offered marriage to one of the daughters of Cromwell, but was refused. He went abroad in 1648, but returned with Charles II. to Scotland in 1650, and again escaped to France after the battle of Worcester, 1651. The sale of the pictures would seem to have commenced during his first exile.

conquer or die: with desperate gallantry the English Cavaliers and the Scotch Highlanders seconded the monarch's valiant onslaught on Cromwell's horse, whose invincible Life Guards were almost driven back by the shock. But they were not seconded; Charles II. had his horse twice shot under him, but, nothing daunted, he was the last to tear himself away from the field, and then only upon the solicitations of his friends.

Charles retired to Kidderminster that evening. The Duke of Buckingham, the gallant Lord Derby, Wilmot, afterwards Earl of Rochester, and some others, rode near him. They were followed by a small body of horse. Disconsolately they rode on northwards, a faithful band of sixty being resolved to escort his Majesty to Scotland. At length they halted on Kinver Heath, near Kidderminster: their guide having lost the way. In this extremity Lord Derby said that he had been received kindly at an old house in a secluded woody country, between Tong Castle and Brewood, on the borders of Staffordshire. It was named 'Boscobel,' he said; and that word has henceforth conjured up to the mind's eye the remembrance of a band of tired heroes, riding through woody glades to an ancient house, where shelter was given to the worn-out horses and scarcely less harassed riders.

But not so rapidly did they in reality proceed. A Catholic family, named Giffard, were living at White-Ladies, about twenty-six miles from Worcester. This was only about half a mile from Boscobel: it had been a convent of Cistercian nuns, whose long white cloaks of old had once been seen, ghost-like, amid forest glades or on hillock green. The White Ladies had other memories to grace it besides those of holy vestals, or of unholy Cavaliers. From the time of the Tudors, a respectable family named Somers had owned the White Ladies, and inhabited it since its white-garbed tenants had been turned out, and the place secularized. 'Somers's House,' as it was called (though more happily, the old name has been restored), had received Queen Elizabeth on her

progress. The richly cultivated old conventual gardens had supplied the Queen with some famous pears, and, in the fulness of her approval of the fruit, she had added them to the City arms. At that time one of these vaunted pear-trees stood securely in the market-place of Worcester.

At the White-Ladies Charles rested for half an hour; and here he left his garters, waistcoat, and other garments, to avoid discovery, ere he proceeded. They were long kept as relics.

The mother of Lord Somers had been placed in this old house for security, for she was on the eve of giving birth to the future statesman, who was born in that sanctuary just at this time. His father at that very moment commanded a troop of horse in Cromwell's army, so that the risk the Cavaliers ran was imminent. The King's horse was led into the hall. Day was dawning; and the Cavaliers, as they entered the old conventual tenement, and saw the sunbeams on its walls, perceived their peril. A family of servants named Penderell held various offices there, and at Boscobel. William took care of Boscobel; George was a servant at White-Ladies; Humphrey was the miller to that house; Richard lived close by, at Hebbal Grange. He and William were called into the royal presence. Lord Derby then said to them, 'This is the King; have a care of him, and preserve him as thou didst me.'

Then the attendant courtiers began undressing the King. They took off his buff-coat, and put on him a 'noggon coarse shirt,' and a green suit and another doublet—Richard Penderell's woodman's dress. Lord Wilmot cut his sovereign's hair with a knife, but Richard Penderell took up his shears and finished the work. 'Burn it,' said the king; but Richard kept the sacred locks. Then Charles covered his dark face with soot. Could anything have taken away the expression of his half-sleepy, half-merry eyes?

They departed, and half an hour afterwards Colonel Ashenhurst, with a troop of Roundhead horse, rode up to the

White-Ladies. The King, meantime, had been conducted by Richard Penderell into a coppice-wood, with a bill-hook in his hands for defence and disguise. But his followers were overtaken near Newport; and here Buckingham, with Lords Talbot and Leviston, escaped, and henceforth, until Charles's wanderings were transferred from England to France, George Villiers was separated from the Prince. Accompanied by the Earls of Derby and Lauderdale, and by Lord Talbot, he proceeded northwards, in hopes of joining General Leslie and the Scotch horse. But their hopes were soon dashed: attacked by a body of Roundheads, Buckingham and Lord Leviston were compelled to leave the high road, to alight from their horses, and to make their way to Bloore Park, near Newport, where Villiers found a shelter. He was soon, however, necessitated to depart: he put on a labourer's dress; he deposited his George, a gift from Henrietta Maria, with a companion, and set off for Billstrop, in Nottinghamshire, one Matthews, a carpenter, acting as his guide; at Billstrop he was welcomed by Mr. Hawley, a Cavalier; and from that place he went to Brookesby, in Leicestershire, the original seat of the Villiers family, and the birthplace of his father. Here he was received by Lady Villiers—the widow, probably, of his father's brother, Sir William Villiers—one of those contented country squires who not only sought no distinction, but scarcely thanked James I. when he made him a baronet. Here might the hunted refugee see, on the open battlements of the church, the shields on which were exhibited united quarterings of his father's family with those of his mother; here, listen to old tales about his grandfather, good Sir George, who married a serving-woman in his deceased wife's kitchen;* and that

* Sir George Villiers's second wife was Mary, daughter of Antony Beaumont, Esq., of Glenfield, (Nichols' Leicestershire, iii. 193,) who was son of Wm. Beaumont, Esq., of Cole Orton. She afterwards was married successively to Sir Wm. Rayner and Sir Thomas Compton, and was created Countess of Buckingham in 1618.

serving-woman became the leader of fashions in the court of James. Here he might ponder on the vicissitudes which marked the destiny of the house of Villiers, and wonder what should come next.

That the spirit of adventure was strong within him, is shown by his daring to go up to London, and disguising himself as a mountebank. He had a coat made, called a 'Jack Pudding Coat:' a little hat was stuck on his head, with a fox's tail in it, and cocks' feathers here and there. A wizard's mask one day, a daubing of flour another, completed the disguise it was then so usual to assume: witness the long traffic held at Exeter Change by the Duchess of Tyrconnel, Frances Jennings, in a white mask, selling laces, and French gew-gaws, a trader to all appearance, but really carrying on political intrigues; every one went to chat with the 'White Milliner,' as she was called, during the reign of William and Mary. The Duke next erected a stage at Charing Cross—in the very face of the stern Rumpers, who, with long faces, rode past the sinful man each day as they came ambling up from the Parliament House. A band of puppet-players and violins set up their shows; and music covers a multitude of incongruities. The ballad was then the great vehicle of personal attack, and Villiers's dawning taste for poetry was shown in the ditties which he now composed, and in which he sometimes assisted vocally. Whilst all the other Cavaliers were forced to fly he thus bearded his enemies in their very homes: sometimes he talked to them face to face, and kept the sanctimonious citizens in talk, till they found themselves sinfully disposed to laugh. But this vagrant life had serious evils: it broke down all the restraints which civilized society naturally, and beneficially, imposes. The Duke of Buckingham, Butler, the author of Hudibras, writes, 'rises, eats, goes to bed by the Julian account, long after all others that go by the new style, and keeps the same hours with owls and the

Antipodes. He is a great observer of the Tartar customs, and never eats till the great cham, having dined, makes proclamation that all the world may go to dinner. He does not dwell in his house, but haunts it like an evil spirit, that walks all night, to disturb the family, and never appears by day. He lives perpetually benighted, runs out of his life, and loses his time as men do their ways in the dark: and as blind men are led by their dogs, so he is governed by some mean servant or other that relates to his pleasures. He is as inconstant as the moon which he lives under; and although he does nothing but advise with his pillow all day, he is as great a stranger to himself as he is to the rest of the world. His mind entertains all things that come and go; but like guests and strangers, they are not welcome if they stay long. This lays him open to all cheats, quacks, and impostors, who apply to every particular humour while it lasts, and afterwards vanish. He deforms nature, while he intends to adorn her, like Indians that hang jewels in their lips and noses. His ears are perpetually drilling with a fiddlestick, and endures pleasures with less patience than other men do their pains.'

The more effectually to support his character as a mountebank, Villiers sold mithridate and galbanum plasters: thousands of spectators and customers thronged every day to see and hear him. Possibly many guessed that beneath all this fantastic exterior some ulterior project was concealed; yet he remained untouched by the City Guards. Well did Dryden describe him:—

> 'Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Beside ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
> Blest madman, who could every hour employ
> With something new to wish or to enjoy!'

His elder sister, Lady Mary Villiers, had married the Duke of Richmond, one of the loyal adherents of Charles I. The duke was, therefore, in durance, at Windsor, whilst the

Villiers in Disguise—The Meeting with his Sister.

Vol. I., p. 17.

duchess was to be placed under strict surveillance at Whitehall.

Villiers resolved to see her. Hearing that she was to pass into Whitehall on a certain day, he set up his stage where she could not fail to perceive him. He had something important to say to her. As she drew near, he cried out to the mob that he would give them a song on the Duchess of Richmond and the Duke of Buckingham: nothing could be more acceptable. 'The mob,' it is related, 'stopped the coach and the duchess.... Nay, so outrageous were the mob, that they forced the duchess, who was then the handsomest woman in England, to sit in the boot of the coach, and to hear him sing all his impertinent songs. Having left off singing, he told them it was no more than reason that he should present the duchess with some of the songs. So he alighted from his stage, covered all over with papers and ridiculous little pictures. Having come to the coach, he took off a black piece of taffeta, which he always wore over one of his eyes, when his sister discovered immediately who he was, yet had so much presence of mind as not to give the least sign of mistrust; nay she gave him some very opprobrious language, but was very eager at snatching the papers he threw into her coach. Among them was a packet of letters, which she had no sooner got but she went forward, the duke, at the head of the mob, attending and hallooing her a good way out of the town.'

A still more daring adventure was contemplated also by this young, irresistible duke. Bridget Cromwell, the eldest daughter of Oliver, was, at that time, a bride of twenty-six years of age; having married, in 1647, the saintly Henry Ireton, Lord Deputy of Ireland. Bridget was the pattern heroine of the '*unco guid*,' the quintessence of all propriety; the impersonation of sanctity; an ultra republican, who scarcely accorded to her father the modest title of Protector. She was esteemed by her party a 'personage of sublime growth:' 'humbled, not exalted,' according to Mrs. Hutchin-

son, by her elevation: 'nevertheless,' says that excellent lady, 'as my Lady Ireton was walking in the St. James's Park, the Lady Lambert, as proud as her husband, came by where she was, and as the present princess always hath precedency of the relict of the dead, so she put by my Lady Ireton, who, nothwithstanding her piety and humility, was a little grieved at the affront.'

After this anecdote one cannot give much credence to this lady's humility: Bridget was, however, a woman of powerful intellect, weakened by her extreme, and to use a now common term, *crotchety* opinions. Like most *esprits forts*, she was easily imposed upon. One day this paragon saw a mountebank dancing on a stage in the most exquisite style. His fine shape, too, caught the attention of one who assumed to be above all folly. It is sometimes fatal to one's peace to look out of a window; no one knows what sights may rivet or displease. Mistress Ireton was sitting at her window unconscious that any one with the hated and malignant name of 'Villiers' was before her. After some unholy admiration, she sent to speak to the mummer. The duke scarcely knew whether to trust himself in the power of the bloodthirsty Ireton's bride or not—yet his courage—his love of sport—prevailed. He visited her that evening: no longer, however, in his jack-pudding coat, but in a rich suit, disguised with a cloak over it. He wore still a plaster over one eye, and was much disposed to take it off, but prudence forbade; and thus he stood in the presence of the prim and saintly Bridget Ireton. The particulars of the interview rest on his statement, and they must not, therefore, be accepted implicitly. Mistress Ireton is said to have made advances to the handsome incognito. What a triumph to a man like Villiers, to have intrigued with my Lord Protector's sanctified daughter! But she inspired him with disgust. He saw in her the presumption and hypocrisy of her father; he hated her as Cromwell's daughter and Ireton's

wife. He told her, therefore, that he was a Jew, and could not by his laws become the paramour of a Christian woman. The saintly Bridget stood amazed; she had imprudently let him into some of the most important secrets of her party. A Jew! It was dreadful! But how could a person of that persuasion be so strict, so strait-laced? She probably entertained all the horror of Jews which the Puritanical party cherished as a virtue; forgetting the lessons of toleration and liberality inculcated by Holy Writ. She sent, however, for a certain Jewish Rabbi to converse with the stranger. What was the Duke of Buckingham's surprise, on visiting her one evening, to see the learned doctor armed at all points with the Talmud, and thirsting for dispute, by the side of the saintly Bridget. He could noways meet such a body of controversy; but thought it best forthwith to set off for the Downs. Before he departed he wrote, however, to Mistress Ireton, on the plea that she might wish to know to what tribe of Jews he belonged. So he sent her a note written with all his native wit and point.*

Buckingham now experienced all the miseries that a man of expensive pleasures with a sequestrated estate is likely to endure. One friend remained to watch over his interests in England. This was John Traylman, a servant of his late father's; who was left to guard the collection of pictures made by the late duke, and deposited in York House. That collection was, in the opinion of competent judges, the third in point of value in England, being only inferior to those of Charles I. and the Earl of Arundel.

It had been bought, with immense expense, partly by the duke's agents in Italy, the Mantua Gallery supplying a great portion—partly in France—partly in Flanders; and to Flanders a great portion was destined now to return. Secretly and laboriously did old Traylman pack up and send

* This incident is taken from Madame Dunois' Memoirs, part i. p. 86.

off these treasures to Antwerp, where now the gay youth whom the aged domestic had known from a child was in want and exile. The pictures were eagerly bought by a foreign collector named Duart. The proceeds gave poor Villiers bread; but the noble works of Titian and Leonardo da Vinci, and others, were lost for ever to England.

It must have been very irritating to Villiers to know that whilst he just existed abroad, the great estates enjoyed by his father were being subjected to pillage by Cromwell's soldiers, or sold for pitiful sums by the Commissioners appointed by Parliament to break up and annihilate many of the old properties in England. Burleigh-on-the-Hill, the stately seat on which the first duke had lavished thousands, had been taken by the Roundheads. It was so large, and presented so long a line of buildings that the Parliamentarians could not hold it without leaving in it a great garrison and stores of ammunition. It was therefore burnt, and the stables alone occupied; and those even were formed into a house of unusual size. York House was doubtless marked out for the next destructive decree. There was something in the very history of this house which might be supposed to excite the wrath of the Roundheads. Queen Mary (whom we must not, after Miss Strickland's admirable life of her, call Bloody Queen Mary, but who will always be best known by that unpleasant title) had bestowed York House on the See of York, as a compensation for York House, at Whitehall, which Henry VIII. had taken from Wolsey. It had afterwards come into possession of the Keepers of the Great Seal. Lord Bacon was born in York House, his father having lived there; and the

'Greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind,'

built here an aviary which cost 300*l.* When the Duke of Lennox wished to buy York House, Bacon thus wrote to him:—'For this you will pardon me: York House is the house where my father died, and where I first breathed;

and there will I yield my last breath, if it so please God and the King.' It did not, however, please the King that he should; the house was borrowed only by the first Duke of Buckingham from the Archbishop of York, and then exchanged for another seat on the plea that the duke would want it for the reception of foreign potentates, and for entertainments given to royalty.

The duke pulled it down: and the house, which was erected as a temporary structure, was so superb that even Pepys, twenty years after it had been left to bats and cobwebs, speaks of it in raptures, as of a place in which the great duke's soul was seen in every chamber. On the walls were shields on which the arms of Manners and of Villiers—peacocks and lions—were quartered. York House was never, however, finished; but, as the lover of old haunts enters Buckingham Street in the Strand, he will perceive an ancient water-gate, beautifully proportioned, built by Inigo Jones—smoky, isolated, impaired—but still speaking volumes of remembrance of the glories of the assassinated duke, who had purposed to build the whole house in that style.

'*Yorschaux*' as he called it—York House—the French ambassador had written word to his friends at home, 'is the most richly fitted up of any that I saw.' The galleries and state rooms were graced by the display of the Roman marbles, both busts and statues, which the first duke had bought from Rubens; whilst in the gardens the Cain and Abel of John of Bologna, given by Philip IV. of Spain to King Charles, and by him bestowed on the elder George Villiers, made that fair *pleasaunce* famous. It was doomed—as were what were called the 'superstitious' pictures in the house—to destruction: henceforth all was in decay and neglect. 'I went to see York House and gardens,' Evelyn writes in 1655, 'belonging to the former greate Buckingham, but now much ruined through neglect.'

Traylman, doubtless, kept George Villiers the younger in

full possession of all that was to happen to that deserted tenement in which the old man mourned for the departed, and thought of the absent.

The intelligence which he had soon to communicate was all-important. York House was to be occupied again; and Cromwell and his coadjutors had bestowed it on Fairfax. The blow was perhaps softened by the reflection that Fairfax was a man of generous temper; and that he had an only daughter, Mary Fairfax, young, and an heiress. Though the daughter of a Puritan, a sort of interest was attached, even by Cavaliers, to Mary Fairfax, from her having, at five years of age, followed her father through the civil wars on horseback, seated before a maid-servant; and having, on her journey, frequently fainted, and was so ill as to have been left in a house by the roadside, her father never expecting to see her again.

In reference to this young girl, then about eighteen years of age, Buckingham now formed a plan. He resolved to return to England disguised, and to offer his hand to Mary Fairfax, and so recover his property through the influence of Fairfax. He was confident of his own attractions; and, indeed, from every account, he appears to have been one of those reckless, handsome, speculative characters that often take the fancy of better men than themselves. 'He had,' says Burnet, 'no sort of literature, only he was drawn into chymistry; and for some years he thought he was very near the finding of the philosopher's stone, which had the effect that attends on all such men as he was, when they are drawn in, to lay out for it. He had no principles of religion, virtue, or friendship; pleasure, frolic, or extravagant diversion, was all he laid to heart. He was true to nothing; for he was not true to himself. He had no steadiness nor conduct; he could keep no secret, nor execute any design without spoiling it: he could never fix his thoughts, nor govern his estate, though then the greatest in England. He was bred about the king,

and for many years he had a great ascendant over him; but he spoke of him to all persons with that contempt, that at last he drew a lasting disgrace upon himself. And he at length ruined both body and mind, fortune and reputation equally.'

This was a sad prospect for poor Mary Fairfax, but certainly if in their choice

> ——— 'Weak women go astray,
> Their stars are more in fault than they,'

and she was less to blame in her choice than her father, who ought to have advised her against the marriage. Where and how they met is not known. Mary was not attractive in person: she was in her youth little, brown, and thin, but became a 'short fat body,' as De Grammont tells us, in her early married life; in the later period of her existence she was described by the Vicomtesse de Longueville as a 'little round crumpled woman, very fond of finery;' and she adds that, on visiting the duchess one day, she found her, though in mourning, in a kind of loose robe over her, all edged and laced with gold. So much for a Puritan's daughter.

To this insipid personage the duke presented himself. She soon liked him, and in spite of his outrageous infidelities, continued to like him after their marriage.

He carried his point: Mary Fairfax became his wife on the 6th of September, 1657, and, by the influence of Fairfax, his estate, or, at all events, a portion of the revenues, about 4,000*l.* a year, it is said, were restored to him. Nevertheless, it is mortifying to find that in 1672, he sold York House, in which his father had taken such pride, for 30,000*l.* The house was pulled down; streets were erected on the gardens: George Street, Villiers Street, Duke Street, Buckingham Street, Off Alley, recall the name of the ill-starred George, first duke, and of his needy, profligate son; but the only trace of the real greatness of the family importance thus swept away is in the motto inscribed

on the point of old Inigo's water-gate, towards the street: '*Fidei coticula crux.*' It is sad for all good royalists to reflect that it was not the rabid Roundhead, but a degenerate Cavalier, who sold and thus destroyed York House.

The marriage with Mary Fairfax, though one of interest solely, was not a *mésalliance:* her father was connected by the female side with the Earls of Rutland; he was also a man of a generous spirit, as he had shown, in handing over to the Countess of Derby the rents of the Isle of Man, which had been granted to him by the Parliament. In a similar spirit he was not sorry to restore York House to the Duke of Buckingham.

Cromwell, however, was highly exasperated by the nuptials between Mary Fairfax and Villiers, which took place at Nun Appleton, near York, one of Fairfax's estates. The Protector had, it is said, intended Villiers for one of his own daughters. Upon what plea he acted it is not stated: he committed Villiers to the Tower, where he remained until the death of Oliver, and the accession of Richard Cromwell.

In vain did Fairfax solicit his release: Cromwell refused it, and Villiers remained in durance until the abdication of Richard Cromwell, when he was set at liberty, but not without the following conditions, dated February 21st, 1658-9:—

'The humble petition of George Duke of Buckingham was this day read. Resolved that George Duke of Buckingham, now prisoner at Windsor Castle, upon his engagement upon his honour at the bar of this House, and upon the engagement of Lord Fairfax in 20,000*l.* that the said duke shall peaceably demean himself for the future, and shall not join with, or abet, or have any correspondence with, any of the enemies of the Lord Protector, and of this Commonwealth, in any of the parts beyond the sea, or within this Commonwealth, shall be discharged of his imprisonment and restraint; and that the Governor of Windsor Castle be

required to bring the Duke of Buckingham to the bar of this House on Wednesday next, to engage his honour accordingly. Ordered, that the security of 20,000*l.* to be given by the Lord Fairfax, on the behalf of the Duke of Buckingham, be taken in the name of His Highness the Lord Protector.'

During his incarceration at Windsor, Buckingham had a companion, of whom many a better man might have been envious: this was Abraham Cowley, an old college friend of the duke's. Cowley was the son of a grocer, and owed his entrance into academic life to having been a King's Scholar at Westminster. One day he happened to take up from his mother's parlour window a copy of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene.' He eagerly perused the delightful volume, though he was then only twelve years old: and this impulse being given to his mind, became at fifteen a reciter of verses. His 'Poetical Blossoms,' published whilst he was still at school, gave, however, no foretaste of his future eminence. He proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, where his friendship with Villiers was formed; and where, perhaps from that circumstance, Cowley's predilections for the cause of the Stuarts was ripened into loyalty.

No two characters could be more dissimilar than those of Abraham Cowley and George Villiers. Cowley was quiet, modest, sober, of a thoughtful, philosophical turn, and of an affectionate nature; neither boasting of his own merits nor depreciating others. He was the friend of Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland; and yet he loved, though he must have condemned, George Villiers. It is not unlikely that, whilst Cowley imparted his love of poetry to Villiers, Villiers may have inspired the pensive and blameless poet with a love of that display of wit then in vogue, and heightened that sense of humour which speaks forth in some of Cowley's productions. Few authors suggest so many new thoughts, really his own, as Cowley. 'His works,' it has been said, 'are a flower-garden run to weeds, but the flowers are numerous and bril-

liant, and a search after them will well repay the pains of a collector who is not too indolent or fastidious.'

As Cowley and his friend passed the weary hours in durance, many an old tale could the poet tell the peer of stirring times; for Cowley had accompanied Charles I. in many a perilous journey, and had protected Queen Henrietta Maria in her escape to France: through Cowley had the correspondence of the royal pair, when separated, been carried on. The poet had before suffered imprisonment for his loyalty; and, to disguise his actual occupation, had obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and assumed the character of a physician, on the strength of knowing the virtues of a few plants.

Many a laugh, doubtless, had Buckingham at the expense of *Dr.* Cowley: however, in later days, the duke proved a true friend to the poet, in helping to procure for him the lease of a farm at Chertsey, from the queen, and here Cowley, rich upon 300*l.* a year, ended his days.

For some time after Buckingham's release, he lived quietly and respectably at Nun-Appleton, with General Fairfax and the vapid Mary. But the Restoration—the first dawnings of which have been referred to in the commencement of this biography—ruined him, body and mind.

He was made a Lord of the Bedchamber, a Member of the Privy Council, and afterwards, Master of the Horse,* and Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire. He lived in great magnificence at Wallingford House, a tenement next to York House, intended to be the habitable and useful appendage to that palace.

He was henceforth, until he proved treacherous to his sovereign, the brightest ornament of Whitehall. Beauty of person was hereditary: his father was styled the 'handsomest-bodied man in England,' and George Villiers the younger equalled

* The duke became Master of the Horse in 1668: he paid 20,000*l.* to the Duke of Albemarle for the post.

George Villiers the elder in all personal accomplishments. When he entered the Presence-Chamber all eyes followed him; every movement was graceful and stately. Sir John Reresby pronounced him 'to be the finest gentleman he ever saw.' 'He was born,' Madame Dunois declared, 'for gallantry and magnificence.' His wit was faultless, but his manners engaging; yet his sallies often descended into buffoonery, and he spared no one in his merry moods. One evening a play of Dryden's was represented. An actress had to spout forth this line—

'My wound is great because it is so small!'

She gave it out with pathos, paused, and was theatrically distressed. Buckingham was seated in one of the boxes. He rose, all eyes were fixed upon a face well known in all gay assemblies, in a tone of burlesque he answered—

'Then 'twould be greater were it none at all.'

Instantly the audience laughed at the duke's tone of ridicule, and the poor woman was hissed off the stage.

The king himself did not escape Buckingham's shafts; whilst Lord Chancellor Clarendon fell a victim to his ridicule: nothing could withstand it. There, not in that iniquitous gallery at Whitehall, but in the king's privy chambers, Villiers might be seen, in all the radiance of his matured beauty. His face was long and oval, with sleepy, yet glistening eyes, over which large arched eyebrows seemed to contract a brow on which the curls of a massive wig (which fell almost to his shoulders) hung low. His nose was long, well formed, and flexible; his lips thin and compressed, and defined, as the custom was, by two very short, fine, black patches of hair, looking more like strips of sticking-plaster than a moustache. As he made his reverence his rich robes fell over a faultless form. He was a beau to the very fold of the cambric band round his throat; with long ends of the richest, closest point that was ever rummaged out from a foreign nunnery to be placed on the person of this sacrilegious sinner.

Behold, now, how he changes. Villiers is Villiers no longer. He is Clarendon, walking solemnly to the Court of the Star Chamber: a pair of bellows is hanging before him for the purse; Colonel Titus is walking with a fireshovel on his shoulder, to represent a mace; the king, himself a capital mimic, is splitting his sides with laughter; the courtiers are fairly in a roar. Then how he was wont to divert the king with his descriptions! 'Ipswich, for instance,' he said, 'was a town without inhabitants—a river it had without waters—streets without names; and it was a place where asses wore boots:' alluding to the asses, when employed in rolling Lord Hereford's bowling-green, having boots on their feet to prevent their injuring the turf.

Flecknoe, the poet, describes the duke at this period, in 'Euterpe Revived'—

> 'The gallant'st person, and the noblest minde,
> In all the world his prince could ever finde,
> Or to participate his private cares,
> Or bear the public weight of his affairs,
> Like well-built arches, stronger with their weight,
> And well-built minds, the steadier with their height;
> Such was the composition and frame,
> O' the noble and the gallant Buckingham.'

The praise, however, even in the duke's best days, was overcharged. Villiers was no 'well-built arch,' nor could Charles trust to the fidelity of one so versatile for an hour. Besides, the moral character of Villiers must have prevented him, even in those days, from bearing 'the public weight of affairs.'

A scandalous intrigue soon proved the unsoundness of Flecknoe's tribute. Amongst the most licentious beauties of the court was Anna Maria, Countess of Shrewsbury, the daughter of Robert Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan, and the wife of Francis, Earl of Shrewsbury: amongst many shameless women she was the most shameless, and her face seems to have well expressed her mind. In the round, fair visage,

with its languishing eyes, and full, pouting mouth, there is something voluptuous and bold. The forehead is broad, but low; and the wavy hair, with its tendril curls, comes down almost to the fine arched eyebrows, and then, falling into masses, sets off white shoulders which seem to designate an inelegant amount of *embonpoint*. There is nothing elevated in the whole countenance, as Lely has painted her, and her history is a disgrace to her age and time.

She had numerous lovers (not in the refined sense of the word), and, at last, took up with Thomas Killigrew. He had been, like Villiers, a royalist: first a page to Charles I., next a companion of Charles II., in exile. He married the fair Cecilia Croft; yet his morals were so vicious that even in the Court of Venice to which he was accredited, in order to borrow money from the merchants of that city, he was too profligate to remain. He came back with Charles II., and was Master of the Revels, or King's Jester, as the court considered him, though without any regular appointment, during his life: the butt, at once, and the satirist of Whitehall.

It was Killigrew's wit and descriptive powers which, when heightened by wine, were inconceivably great, that induced Villiers to select Lady Shrewsbury for the object of his admiration. When Killigrew perceived that he was supplanted by Villiers, he became frantic with rage, and poured out the bitterest invectives against the countess. The result was that, one night, returning from the Duke of York's apartments at St. James's, three passes with a sword were made at him through his chair, and one of them pierced his arm. This, and other occurrences, at last aroused the attention of Lord Shrewsbury, who had hitherto never doubted his wife: he challenged the Duke of Buckingham; and his infamous wife, it is said, held her paramour's horse, disguised as a page. Lord Shrewsbury was killed,* and the scandalous intimacy went on

* The duel with the Earl of Shrewsbury took place 17th January, 1667-8.

as before. No one but the queen, no one but the Duchess of Buckingham, appeared shocked at this tragedy, and no one minded their remarks, or joined in their indignation: all moral sense was suspended, or wholly stifled; and Villiers gloried in his depravity, more witty, more amusing, more fashionable than ever; and yet he seems, by the best-known and most extolled of his poems, to have had some conception of what a real and worthy attachment might be.

The following verses are to his 'Mistress.'

'What a dull fool was I
To think so gross a lie,
As that I ever was in love before!
I have, perhaps, known one or two,
With whom I was content to be
At that which they call keeping company.
But after all that they could do,
I still could be with more.
Their absence never made me shed a tear;
And I can truly swear,
That, till my eyes first gazed on you,
I ne'er beheld the thing I could adore.

'A world of things must curiously be sought:
A world of things must be together brought
To make up charms which have the power to move,
Through a discerning eye, true love;
That is a master-piece above
What only looks and shape can do;
There must be wit and judgment too,
Greatness of thought, and worth, which draw,
From the whole world, respect and awe.

'She that would raise a noble love must find
Ways to beget a passion for her mind;
She must be that which she to be would seem,
For all true love is grounded on esteem:
Plainness and truth gain more a generous heart
Than all the crooked subtleties of art.

She must be—what said I?—she must be *you:*
None but yourself that miracle can do.
At least, I'm sure, thus much I plainly see,
None but yourself e'er did it upon me.
'Tis you alone that can my heart subdue,
To you alone it always shall be true.'

The next lines are also remarkable for the delicacy and happy turn of the expressions—

Though Phillis, from prevailing charms,
Have forc'd my Delia from my arms,
Think not your conquest to maintain
By rigour or unjust disdain.
In vain, fair nymph, in vain you strive,
For Love doth seldom Hope survive.
My heart may languish for a time,
As all beauties in their prime
Have justified such cruelty,
By the same fate that conquered me.
When age shall come, at whose command
Those troops of beauty must disband—
A rival's strength once took away,
What slave's so dull as to obey?
But if you'll learn a noble way
To keep his empire from decay,
And there for ever fix your throne,
Be kind, but kind to me alone.'

Like his father, who ruined himself by building, Villiers had a monomania for bricks and mortar, yet he found time to write 'The Rehearsal,' a play on which Mr. Reed in his 'Dramatic Biography' makes the following observation: 'It is so perfect a masterpiece in its way, and so truly original, that, notwithstanding its prodigious success, even the task of imitation, which most kinds of excellence have invited inferior geniuses to undertake, has appeared as too arduous to be attempted with regard to this, which through a whole century stands alone, notwithstanding that the very plays it was written

expressly to ridicule are forgotten, and the taste it was meant to expose totally exploded.'

The reverses of fortune which brought George Villiers to abject misery were therefore, in a very great measure, due to his own misconduct, his depravity, his waste of life, his perversion of noble mental powers: yet in many respects he was in advance of his age. He advocated, in the House of Lords, toleration to Dissenters. He wrote a 'Short Discourse on the Reasonableness of Men's having a Religion, or Worship of God;' yet, such was his inconsistency, that, in spite of these works, and of one styled a 'Demonstration of the Deity,' written a short time before his death, he assisted Lord Rochester in his atheistic poem upon 'Nothing.'

Butler, the author of Hudibras, too truly said of Villiers 'that he had studied *the whole body of vice;*' a most fearful censure—a most significant description of a bad man. 'His parts,' he adds, 'are disproportionate to the whole, and like a monster, he has more of some, and less of others, than he should have. He has pulled down all that nature raised in him, and built himself up again after a model of his own. He has dammed up all those lights that nature made into the noblest prospects of the world, and opened other little blind loopholes backward, by turning day into night, and night into day.'

The satiety and consequent misery produced by this terrible life are ably described by Butler. And it was perhaps partly this wearied, worn-out spirit that caused Villiers to rush madly into politics for excitement. In 1666 he asked for the office of Lord President of the North; it was refused: he became disaffected, raised mutinies, and, at last, excited the indignation of his too-indulgent sovereign. Charles dismissed him from his office, after keeping him for some time in confinement. After this epoch little is heard of Buckingham but what is disgraceful. He was again restored to Whitehall, and, according to Pepys, even closeted with Charles, whilst the

Duke of York was excluded. A certain acquaintance of the duke's remonstrated with him upon the course which Charles now took in Parliament. 'How often have you said to me,' this person remarked, 'that the king was a weak man, unable to govern, but to be governed, and that you could command him as you liked? Why do you suffer him to do these things?'

'Why,' answered the duke, 'I do suffer him to do these things, that I may hereafter the better command him.' A reply which betrays the most depraved principle of action, whether towards a sovereign or a friend, that can be expressed. His influence was for some time supreme, yet he became the leader of the opposition, and invited to his table the discontented peers, to whom he satirized the court, and condemned the king's want of attention to business. Whilst the theatre was ringing with laughter at the inimitable character of Bayes in the 'Rehearsal,' the House of Lords was listening with profound attention to the eloquence that entranced their faculties, making wrong seem right, for Buckingham was ever heard with attention.

Taking into account his mode of existence, 'which,' says Clarendon, 'was a life by night more than by day, in all the liberties that nature could desire and wit invent,' it was astonishing how extensive an influence he had in both Houses of Parliament. His rank and condescension, the pleasantness of his humours and conversation, and the extravagance and keenness of his wit, unrestrained by modesty or religion, caused persons of all opinions and dispositions to be fond of his company, and to imagine that these levities and vanities would wear off with age, and that there would be enough of good left to make him useful to his country, for which he pretended a wonderful affection.

But this brilliant career was soon checked. The varnish over the hollow character of this extraordinary man was eventually rubbed off. We find the first hint of that famous

coalition styled the *Cabal*, in Pepys's Diary, and henceforth the duke must be regarded as a ruined man.

'He' (Sir H. Cholmly) 'tells me that the Duke of Buckingham his crimes, as far as he knows, are his being of a caball with some discontented persons of the late House of Commons, and opposing the desires of the king in all his matters in that House; and endeavouring to become popular, and advising how the Commons' House should proceed, and how he would order the House of Lords. And he hath been endeavouring to have the king's nativity calculated; which was done, and the fellow now in the Tower about it. . . . This silly lord hath provoked, by his ill carriage, the Duke of York, my Lord Chancellor, and all the great persons, and therefore most likely will die.'

One day, in the House of Lords, during a conference between the two Houses, Buckingham leaned rudely over the shoulder of Henry Pierrepont Marquis of Dorchester. Lord Dorchester merely removed his elbow. Then the duke asked him if he was uneasy. 'Yes,' the marquis replied, adding, 'the duke dared not do this if he were anywhere else.' Buckingham retorted, 'Yes, he would: and he was a better man than my lord marquis;' on which Dorchester told him that he lied. On this Buckingham struck off Dorchester's hat, seized him by the periwig, pulled it aside, and held him. The Lord Chamberlain and others interposed and sent them both to the Tower. Nevertheless, not a month afterwards, Pepys speaks of seeing the duke's play of 'The Chances' acted at Whitehall. 'A good play,' he condescends to say, 'I find it, and the actors most good in it; and pretty to hear Knipp sing in the play very properly "All night I weepe," and sung it admirably. The whole play pleases me well: and most of all, the sight of many fine ladies, amongst others, my Lady Castlemaine and Mrs. Middleton.'

The whole management of public affairs was, at this period, intrusted to five persons, and hence the famous combination,

the united letters of which formed the word 'Cabal:'—Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale. Their reprehensible schemes, their desperate characters, rendered them the opprobrium of their age, and the objects of censure to all posterity. Whilst matters were in this state a daring outrage, which spoke fearfully of the lawless state of the times, was ascribed, though wrongly, to Buckingham. The Duke of Ormond, the object of his inveterate hatred, was at that time Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Colonel Blood,—a disaffected disbanded officer of the Commonwealth, who had been attainted for a conspiracy in Ireland, but had escaped punishment—came to England, and acted as a spy for the Cabal, who did not hesitate to countenance this daring scoundrel.

His first exploit was to attack the Duke of Ormond's coach one night in St. James's Street: to secure his person, bind him, put him on horseback after one of his accomplices, and carry him to Tyburn, where he meant to hang his grace. On their way, however, Ormond, by a violent effort, threw himself on the ground; a scuffle ensued: the duke's servants came up, and after receiving the fire of Blood's pistols, the duke escaped. Lord Ossory, the Duke of Ormond's son, on going afterward to court, met Buckingham, and addressed him in these words:—

'My lord, I know well that you are at the bottom of this late attempt on my father; but I give you warning, if he by any means come to a violent end, I shall not be at a loss to know the author. I shall consider you as an assassin, and shall treat you as such; and wherever I meet you I shall pistol you, though you stood behind the king's chair; and I tell it you in his majesty's presence, that you may be sure I shall not fail of performance.'

Blood's next feat was to carry off from the Tower the crown jewels. He was overtaken and arrested: and was then asked to name his accomplices. 'No,' he replied, 'the fear

of danger shall never tempt me to deny guilt or to betray a friend.' Charles II., with undignified curiosity, wished to see the culprit. On inquiring of Blood how he dared to make so bold an attempt on the crown, the bravo answered, 'My father lost a good estate fighting for the crown, and I considered it no harm to recover it by the crown.' He then told his majesty how he had resolved to assassinate him: how he had stood among the reeds in Battersea-fields with this design; how then, a sudden awe had come over him: and Charles was weak enough to admire Blood's fearless bearing and to pardon his attempt. Well might the Earl of Rochester write of Charles—

> 'Here lies my sovereign lord the king,
> Whose word no man relies on;
> Who never said a foolish thing,
> And never did a wise one.'

Notwithstanding Blood's outrages—the slightest penalty for which in our days would have been penal servitude for life—Evelyn met him, not long afterwards, at Lord Clifford's, at dinner, when De Grammont and other French noblemen were entertained. 'The man,' says Evelyn, 'had not only a daring, but a villanous, unmerciful look, a false countenance; but very well-spoken, and dangerously insinuating.'

Early in 1662, the Duke of Buckingham had been engaged in practices against the court: he had disguised deep designs by affecting the mere man of pleasure. Never was there such splendour as at Wallingford House—such wit and gallantry; such perfect good breeding; such apparently open-handed hospitality. At those splendid banquets, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, 'a man whom the Muses were fond to inspire, but ashamed to avow,' showed his 'beautiful face,' as it was called; and chimed in with that wit for which the age was famous. The frequenters at Wallingford House gloried in their indelicacy. 'One is amazed,' Horace Walpole

observes, 'at hearing the age of Charles II. called polite.' The Puritans have affected to call everything by a Scripture name; the new comers affected to call everything by its right name;

> 'As if preposterously they would confess
> A forced hypocrisy in wickedness.'

Walpole compares the age of Charles II. to that of Aristophanes—'which called its own grossness polite.' How bitterly he decries the stale poems of the time as 'a heap of senseless ribaldry;' how truly he shows that licentiousness weakens as well as depraves the judgment. 'When Satyrs are brought to court,' he observes, 'no wonder the Graces would not trust themselves there.'

The Cabal is said, however, to have been concocted, not at Wallingford House, but at Ham House, near Kingston-on-Thames.

In this stately old manor-house, the abode of the Tollemache family, the memory of Charles II. and of his court seems to linger still. Ham House was intended for the residence of Henry, Prince of Wales, and was built in 1610. It stands near the river Thames; and is flanked by noble avenues of elm and of chestnut trees, down which one may almost, as it were, hear the king's talk with his courtiers; see Arlington approach with the well-known patch across his nose; or spy out the lovely, childish Miss Stuart and her future husband, the Duke of Richmond, slipping behind into the garden, lest the jealous mortified king should catch a sight of the 'conscious lovers.'

This stately structure was given by Charles II., in 1672, to the Duke and Duchess of Lauderdale: she, the supposed mistress of Cromwell; he, the cruel, hateful Lauderdale of the Cabal. This detestable couple, however, furnished with massive grandeur the apartments of Ham House. They had the ceilings painted by Verrio; the furniture was rich, and

even the bellows and brushes in some of the rooms are of silver filigree. One room is furnished with yellow damask, still rich, though faded; the very seats on which Charles, looking around him, saw Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley (the infamous Shaftesbury), and Lauderdale—and knew not, good easy man, that he was looking on a band of traitors—are still there. Nay, he even sat to Sir Peter Lely for a portrait for this very place—in which schemes for the ruin of the kingdom were concocted. All, probably, was smooth and pleasing to the monarch as he ranged down the fine gallery, ninety-two feet long; or sat at dinner amid his foes in that hall, surrounded with an open gallery; or disported himself on the river's green brink. Nay, one may even fancy Nell Gwynn taking a day's pleasure in this then lone and ever sweet locality. We hear her swearing, as she was wont to do, perchance at the dim looking-glasses, her own house in Pall Mall, given her by the king, having been filled up, for the comedian, entirely, ceiling and all, with looking-glass. How bold and pretty she looked in her undress, even Pepys—no very sound moralist, though a vast hypocrite—tells us: Nelly, 'all unready' was 'very pretty, prettier far than he thought.' But to see how she was 'painted,' would, he thought, 'make a man mad.'

'Madame Ellen,' as after her *elevation*, as it was termed, she was called, might, since she held long a great sway over Charles's fancy, be suffered to scamper about Ham House—where her merry laugh perhaps scandalized the now saintly Duchess of Lauderdale, just to impose on the world; for Nell was regarded as the Protestant champion of the court, in opposition to her French rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth.

Let us suppose that she has been at Ham House, and is gone off to Pall Mall again, where she can see her painted face in every turn. The king has departed, and Killigrew, who, at all events, is loyal, and the true-hearted Duke of Richmond, all are away to London. In yon sanctimonious-

looking closet, next to the duchess's bed-chamber, with her psalter and her prayer-book on her desk, which is fixed to her great chair, and that very cane which still hangs there serving as her support from that closet—murmur and wrangle the component parts of that which was never mentioned without fear—the Cabal. They dare not trust themselves in the gallery: there is tapestry there, and we all know what coverts there are for eaves-droppers and spiders in tapestried walls; then the great cardinal spiders do so click there, are so like the death-watch, that Villiers, who is inveterately superstitious, will not abide there. The hall, with its enclosing galleries, and the buttery near, are manifestly unsafe. So they herd, nay crouch, mutter, and concoct that fearful treachery which, as far as their country is concerned, has been a thing apart in our annals. Englishmen are turbulent, ambitious, unscrupulous; but the craft of Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale—the subtlety of Ashley, seem hardly conceivable either in a Scot or a Southern.

These meetings had their natural consequence. One leaves Lauderdale, Arlington, Ashley, and Clifford, to their fate. But the career of Villiers inspires more interest. He seemed born for better things. Like many men of genius, he was so credulous that the faith he pinned on one Heydon, an astrologer, at this time, perhaps, buoyed him up with false hopes. Be it as it may, his plots now tended to open insurrection. In 1666, a proclamation had been issued for his apprehension —he having then absconded. On this occasion he was saved by the act of one whom he had injured grossly—his wife. She managed to outride the serjeant-at-arms, and to warn him of his danger. She had borne his infidelities, after the fashion of the day, as a matter of course: jealousy was then an impertinence—constancy, a chimera; and her husband, whatever his conduct, had ever treated her with kindness of manner: he had that charm, that attribute of his family, in perfection, and it had fascinated Mary Fairfax.

He fled, and played for a year successfully the pranks of his youth. At last, worn out, he talked of giving himself up to justice. 'Mr. Fenn, at the table, says that he hath been taken by the watch two or three times of late, at unseasonable hours, but so disguised they did not know him; and when I come home, by and by, Mr. Lowther tells me that the Duke of Buckingham do dine publickly this day at Wadlow's, at the Sun Tavern; and is mighty merry, and sent word to the Lieutenant of the Tower, that he would come to him as soon as he had dined.'

Whilst in the Tower—to which he was again committed—Buckingham's pardon was solicited by Lady Castlemaine; on which account the king was very angry with her; called her a meddling 'jade;' she calling him 'fool,' and saying if he was not a fool he never would suffer his best subjects to be imprisoned—referring to Buckingham. And not only did she ask his liberty, but the restitution of his places. No wonder there was discontent when such things were done and public affairs were in such a state. We must again quote the graphic, terse language of Pepys:—'It was computed that the Parliament had given the king for this war only, besides all prizes, and besides the 200,000*l.* which he was to spend of his own revenue, to guard the sea, above 5,000,000*l.*, and odd 100,000*l.*; which is a most prodigious sum. Sir H. Cholmly, as a true English gentleman, do decry the king's expenses of his privy purse, which in King James's time did not rise to above 5,000*l.* a year, and in King Charles's to 10,000*l.*, do now cost us above 100,000*l.*, besides the great charge of the monarchy, as the Duke of York has 100,000*l.* of it, and other limbs of the royal family.'

In consequence of Lady Castlemaine's intervention, Villiers was restored to liberty—a strange instance, as Pepys remarks, of the 'fool's play' of the age. Buckingham was now as presuming as ever: he had a theatre of his own, and he soon showed his usual arrogance by beating Henry Killigrew on

the stage, and taking away his coat and sword; all very 'innocently' done, according to Pepys. In July he appeared in his place in the House of Lords, as 'brisk as ever,' and sat in his robes, 'which,' says Pepys, 'is a monstrous thing that a man should be proclaimed against, and put in the Tower, and released without any trial, and yet not restored to his places.'

We next find the duke intrusted with a mission to France, in concert with Lords Halifax and Arlington. In the year 1680, he was threatened with an impeachment, in which, with his usual skill, he managed to exculpate himself by blaming Lord Arlington. The House of Commons passed a vote for his removal; and he entered the ranks of the opposition.

But this career of public meanness and private profligacy was drawing to a close. Alcibiades no longer—his frame wasted by vice—his spirits broken by pecuniary difficulties—Buckingham's importance visibly sank away. 'He remained, at last,' to borrow the words of Hume, 'as incapable of doing hurt as he had ever been little desirous of doing good to mankind.' His fortune had now dwindled down to 300*l.* a year in land; he sold Wallingford House, and removed into the City.

And now the fruits of his adversity, not, we hope too late, began to appear. Like Lord Rochester, who had ordered all his immoral works to be burnt, Buckingham now wished to retrieve the past. In 1685 he wrote the religious works which form so striking a contrast with his other productions.

That he had been up to the very time of his ruin perfectly impervious to remorse, dead also to shame, is amply manifested by his conduct soon after his duel with the Earl of Shrewsbury.

Sir George Etherege had brought out a new play at the Duke of York's Theatre. It was called, 'She Would if she Could.' Plays in those days began at what we now consider

our luncheon hour. Though Pepys arrived at the theatre at two o'clock—his wife having gone before—about a thousand people had been put back from the pit. At last, seeing his wife in the eighteen-penny-box, he 'made shift' to get there and there saw, 'but lord!' (his own words are inimitable) 'how dull, and how silly the play, there being nothing in the world good in it, and few people pleased in it. The king was there; but I sat mightily behind and could see but little, and hear not at all. The play being done, I into the pit to look for my wife, it being dark and raining, but could not find her; and so staid going between the two doors and through the pit an hour and half, I think, after the play was done; the people staying there till the rain was over, and to talk to one another. And among the rest, here was the Duke of Buckingham to-day openly in the pit; and there I found him with my Lord Buckhurst, and Sedley, and Etheridge the poet, the last of whom I did hear mightily find fault with the actors, that they were out of humour, and had not their parts perfect, and that Harris did do nothing, nor could so much as sing a ketch in it; and so was mightily concerned, while all the rest did, through the whole pit, blame the play as a silly, dull thing, though there was something very roguish and witty; but the design of the play, and end, mighty insipid.'

Buckingham had held out to his Puritan friends the hope of his conversion for some years; and when they attempted to convert him, he had appointed a time for them to finish their work. They kept their promise, and found him in the most profligate society. It was indeed impossible to know in what directions his fancies might take him, when we find him believing in the predictions of a poor fellow, in a wretched lodging, near Tower Hill, who, having cast his nativity, assured the duke he would be king.

He had continued for years to live with the Countess of Shrewsbury, and two months after her husband's death, had taken her to his home. Then, at last, the Duchess of Buck-

ingham indignantly observed, that she and the countess could not possibly live together. 'So I thought, madam,' was the reply. 'I have therefore ordered your coach to take you to your father's.' It has been asserted that Dr. Sprat, the duke's chaplain, actually married him to Lady Shrewsbury, and that his legal wife thenceforth was styled 'The Duchess-dowager.'

He retreated with his mistress to Claverdon, near Windsor, situated on the summit of a hill which is washed by the Thames. It is a noble building, with a great terrace in front, under which are twenty-six niches, in which Buckingham had intended to place twenty-six statues as large as life; and in the middle is an alcove, with stairs. Here he lived with the infamous countess, by whom he had a son, whom he styled Earl of Coventry (his second title), and who died an infant.

One lingers still over the social career of one whom Louis XIV. called 'the only English gentleman he had ever seen.' A capital retort was made to Buckingham by the Princess of Orange, during an interview, when he stopped at the Hague, between her and the Duke. He was trying diplomatically to convince her of the affection of England for the States. 'We do not,' he said, 'use Holland like a mistress, we love her as a wife.' '*Vraiment je crois que vous nous aimez comme vous aimez la vôtre*,' was the sharp and clever answer.

On the death of Charles II., in 1685, Buckingham retired to the small remnant of his Yorkshire estates. His debts were now set down at the sum of 140,000*l*. They were liquidated by the sale of his estates. He took kindly to a country life, to the surprise of his old comrade in pleasure, Etherege. 'I have heard the news,' that wit cried, alluding to this change, 'with no less astonishment than if I had been told that the Pope had begun to wear a periwig and had turned beau in the seventy-fourth year of his age!'

Father Petre and Father Fitzgerald were sent by James II.

to convert the duke to Popery. The following anecdote is told of their conference with the dying sinner:—'We deny,' said the Jesuit Petre, 'that any one can be saved out of our Church. Your grace allows that our people may be saved.' —'No, curse ye,' said the duke, 'I make no doubt you will all be damned to a man!' 'Sir,' said the father, 'I cannot argue with a person so void of all charity.'—'I did not expect, my reverend father,' said the duke, 'such a reproach from you, whose whole reasoning was founded on the very same instance of want of charity to yourself.'

Buckingham's death took place at Helmsby, in Yorkshire, and the immediate cause was an ague and fever, owing to having sat down on the wet grass after fox-hunting. Pope has given the following forcible, but inaccurate, account of his last hours, and the place in which they were passed:—

'In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaster and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
With tape-tied curtains never meant to draw;
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies:—alas! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure and that soul of whim!
Gallant and gay, in Claverdon's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love;
Or, just as gay, at council in a ring
Of mimic'd statesmen and their merry King.
No wit to flatter left of all his store,
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more
Then victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends.'

Far from expiring in the 'worst inn's worst room,' the duke breathed his last in Kirby Moorside, in a house which had once been the best in the place. Brian Fairfax, who loved this brilliant reprobate, has left the only authentic account on record of his last hours.

The night previous to the duke's death Fairfax had received a message from him desiring him to prepare a bed for him in his house, Bishop Hill, in York. The next day, however, Fairfax was sent for to his master, whom he found dying. He was speechless, but gave the afflicted servant an earnest look of recognition.

The Earl of Arran, son of the Duke of Hamilton, and a gentleman of the neighbourhood, stood by his bedside. He had then received the Holy Communion from a neighbouring clergyman of the Established Church. When the minister came, it is said that he inquired of the duke what religion he professed. 'It is,' replied the dying man, 'an insignificant question, for I have been a shame and a disgrace to all religions: if you can do me any good, pray do.' When a Popish priest had been mentioned to him, he answered vehemently, 'No, no!'

He was in a very low state when Lord Arran had found him. But though that nobleman saw death in his looks, the duke said he 'felt so well at heart that he knew he could be in no danger.'

He appeared to have had inflammation in the bowels, which ended in mortification. He begged of Lord Arran to stay with him. The house seems to have been in a most miserable condition, for in a letter from Lord Arran to Dr. Sprat, he says: 'I confess it made my heart bleed to see the Duke of Buckingham in so pitiful a place, and so bad a condition, and what made it worse, he was not at all sensible of it, for he thought in a day or two he should be well; and when we reminded him of his condition, he said it was not as we apprehended. So I sent for a worthy gentleman, Mr. Gibson, to be assistant to me in this work; so we jointly represented his condition to him, who I saw was at first very uneasy; but I think we should not have discharged the duties of honest men if we had suffered him to go out of this world without desiring him to prepare for death.' The duke joined heartily

in the beautiful prayers for the dying, of our Church, and yet there was a sort of selfishness and indifference to others manifest even at the last.

'Mr. Gibson,' writes Lord Arran, 'asked him if he had made a will, or if he would declare who was to be his heir? but to the first, he answered he had made none; and to the last, whoever was named he answered, 'No.' First, my lady duchess was named, and then I think almost everybody that had any relation to him, but his answer always was, 'No.' I did fully represent my lady duchess' condition to him, but nothing that was said to him could make him come to any point.'

In this 'retired corner,' as Lord Arran terms it, did the former wit and beau, the once brave and fine cavalier, the reckless plotter in after-life, end his existence. His body was removed to Helmsby Castle, there to wait the duchess' pleasure, being meantime embalmed. Not one farthing could his steward produce to defray his burial. His George and blue ribbon were sent to King James, with an account of his death.

In Kirby Moorside the following entry in the register of burials records the event, which is so replete with a singular retributive justice—so constituted to impress and sadden the mind:—

'Georges Villus Lord dooke of bookingham.'

He left scarcely a friend to mourn his life; for to no man had he been true. He died on the 16th of April according to some accounts; according to others, on the third of that month, 1687, in the sixty-first year of his age. His body, after embalming, was deposited in the family vault in Henry VII.'s chapel.* He left no children, and his title was there-

* Brian Fairfax states, that at his death (the Duke of Buckingham's) he charged his debts on his estate, leaving much more than enough to cover them. By the register of Westminster Abbey it appears that he was buried in Henry VII.'s Chapel, 7th June, 1687.

fore extinct. The Duchess of Buckingham, of whom Brian Fairfax remarks, 'that if she had none of the vanities, she had none of the vices of the court,' survived him several years. She died in 1705, at the age of sixty-six, and was buried in the vault of the Villiers' family, in the chapel of Henry VII.

Such was the extinction of all the magnificence and intellectual ascendency that at one time centred in this great and gifted family.

COUNT DE GRAMMONT, ST. EVREMOND, AND LORD ROCHESTER.

COUNT DE GRAMMONT, ST. EVREMOND, AND LORD ROCHESTER.

It has been observed by a French critic, that the Mémoires de Grammont afford the truest specimens of French character in our language. To this it may be added, that the subject of that animated narrative was most completely French in principle, in intelligence, in wit that hesitated at nothing, in spirits that were never daunted, and in that incessant activity which is characteristic of his countrymen. Grammont, it was said, 'slept neither night nor day;' his life was one scene of incessant excitement.

His father, supposed to have been the natural son of Henry the Great, of France, did not suppress that fact, but desired to publish it: for the morals of his time were so depraved, that it was thought to be more honourable to be the illegitimate son of a king than the lawful child of lowlier parents. Born in the Castle of Semeac, on the banks of the Garonne, the fame of two fair ancestresses, Corisande and Menadame, had entitled the family of De Grammont to expect in each successive member an inheritance of beauty. Wit, courage, good-nature, a charming address, and boundless assurance, were the heritage of Philibert de Grammont.

Beauty was not his possession: good-nature, a more popular quality, he had in abundance:

> 'His wit to scandal never stooping,
> His mirth ne'er to buffoonery drooping.'

As Philibert grew up, the two aristocratic professions of France were presented for his choice: the army, or the church. Neither of these vocations constitutes now the ambition of the high-born in France: the church, to a certain extent, retains its prestige, but the army, ever since officers have risen from the ranks, does not comprise the same class of men as in England. In the reign of Louis XIII., when De Grammont lived, it was otherwise. All political power was vested in the church. Richelieu was, to all purposes, the ruler of France, the dictator of Europe; and, with regard to the church, great men, at the head of military affairs, were daily proving to the world how much intelligence could effect with a small numerical power. Young men took one course or another: the sway of the cabinet, on the one hand, tempted them to the church; the brilliant exploits of Turenne, and of Condé, on the other, led them to the camp. It was merely the difference of dress between the two that constituted the distinction: the soldier might be as pious as the priest, the priest was sure to be as worldly as the soldier; the soldier might have ecclesiastical preferment; the priest sometimes turned out to fight.

Philibert de Grammont chose to be a soldier. He was styled the Chevalier de Grammont, according to custom, his father being still living. He fought under Turenne, at the siege of Trino. The army in which he served was beleaguering that city when the gay youth from the banks of the Garonne joined it, to aid it not so much by his valour as by the fun, the raillery, the off-hand anecdote, the ready, hearty companionship which lightened the soldier's life in the trenches: adieu to impatience, to despair, even to gravity. The very generals could not maintain their seriousness when the light-hearted De Grammont uttered a repartee,—

'Sworn enemy to all long speeches,
Lively and brilliant, frank and free,
Author of many a repartee:
Remember, over all, that he
Was not renowned for storming breaches.'

Where he came, all was sunshine, yet there breathed not a colder, graver man than the Calvinist Turenne: modest, serious, somewhat hard, he gave the young nobility who served under him no quarter in their shortcomings; but a word, a look, from De Grammont could make him, *malgré lui*, unbend. The gay chevalier's white charger's prancing, its gallant rider foremost in every peril, were not forgotten in after-times, when De Grammont, in extreme old age, chatted over the achievements and pleasures of his youth.

Amongst those who courted his society in Turenne's army was Matta, a soldier of simple manners, hardy habits, and handsome person, joined to a candid, honest nature. He soon persuaded De Grammont to share his quarters, and there they gave splendid entertainments, which, Frenchman-like, De Grammont paid for out of the successes of the gaming-tables. But chances were against them; the two officers were at the mercy of their *maître d'hôtel*, who asked for money. One day, when De Grammont came home sooner than usual, he found Matta fast asleep. Whilst De Grammont stood looking at him, he awoke, and burst into a violent fit of laughter.

'What is the matter?' cried the chevalier.

'Faith, chevalier,' answered Matta, 'I was dreaming that we had sent away our *maître d'hôtel*, and were resolved to live like our neighbours for the rest of the campaign.'

'Poor fellow!' cried De Grammont. 'So, you are knocked down at once: what would have become of you if you had been reduced to the situation I was in at Lyons, four days before I came here? Come, I will tell you all about it.'

'Begin a little farther back,' cried Matta, 'and tell me about the manner in which you first paid your respects to Cardinal

Richelieu. Lay aside your pranks as a child, your genealogy, and all your ancestors together; you cannot know anything about them.'

'Well,' replied De Grammont, 'it was my father's own fault that he was not Henry IV.'s son: see what the Grammonts have lost by this cross-grained fellow! Faith, we might have walked before the Counts de Vendôme at this very moment.'

Then he went on to relate how he had been sent to Pau, to the college, to be brought up to the church, with an old servant to act both as his valet and his guardian. How his head was too full of gaming to learn Latin. How they gave him his rank at college, as the youth of quality, when he did not deserve it; how he travelled up to Paris to his brother to be polished, and went to court in the character of an abbé. 'Ah, Matta, you know the kind of dress then in vogue. No, I would not change my dress, but I consented to draw over it a cassock. I had the finest head of hair in the world, well curled and powdered above my cassock, and below were my white buskins and spurs.'

Even Richelieu, that hypocrite, he went on to relate, could not help laughing at the parti-coloured costume, sacerdotal above, soldier-like below; but the cardinal was greatly offended —not with the absence of decorum, but with the dangerous wit, that could laugh in public at the cowl and shaven crown, points which constituted the greatest portion of Richelieu's sanctity.

De Grammont's brother, however, thus addressed the Chevalier:—'Well, my little parson,' said he, as they went home, 'you have acted your part to perfection; but now you must choose your career. If you like to stick to the church, you will possess great revenues, and nothing to do; if you choose to go into the army, you will risk your arm or your leg, but in time you may be a major-general with a wooden leg and a glass eye, the spectacle of an indifferent, ungrateful court. Make your choice.'

The choice, Philibert went on to relate, was made. For the good of his soul, he renounced the church, but for his own advantage, he kept his abbacy. This was not difficult in days when secular abbés were common; nothing would induce him to change his resolution of being a soldier. Meantime he was perfecting his accomplishments as a fine gentleman, one of the requisites for which was a knowledge of all sorts of games. No matter that his mother was miserable at his decision. Had her son been an abbé, she thought he would have become a saint: nevertheless, when he returned home, with the air of a courtier and a man of the world, boy as he was, and the very impersonation of what might then be termed *la jeune France*, she was so enchanted with him that she consented to his going to the wars, attended again by Brinon, his valet, equerry, and mentor in one. Next in De Grammont's narrative came his adventure at Lyons, where he spent the 200 louis his mother had given Brinon for him, in play, and very nearly broke the poor old servant's heart; where he had duped a horse-dealer; and he ended by proposing plans, similarly *honourable*, to be adopted for their present emergencies.

The first step was to go to head-quarters, to dine with a certain Count de Cameran, a Savoyard, and invite him to supper. Here Matta interposed, 'Are you mad?' he exclaimed. 'Invite him to supper! we have neither money nor credit; we are ruined; and to save us you intend to give a supper!'

'Stupid fellow!' cried De Grammont. 'Cameran plays at quinze: so do I: we want money. He has more than he knows what to do with: we give a supper, he pays for it. However,' he added, 'it is necessary to take certain precautions. You command the guards: when night comes on, order your *Sergent-de-place* to have fifteen or twenty men under arms, and let them lay themselves flat on the ground between this and head-quarters. Most likely we shall win this stupid fellow's money. Now the Piedmontese are sus-

picious, and he commands the horse. Now you know, Matta, you cannot hold your tongue, and are very likely to let out some joke that will vex him. Supposing he takes it into his head that he is being cheated? He has always eight or ten horsemen: we must be prepared.'

'Embrace me!' cried Matta, 'embrace me! for thou art unparalleled. I thought you only meant to prepare a pack of cards, and some false dice. But the idea of protecting a man who plays at quinze by a detachment of foot is excellent; thine own, dear chevalier!'

Thus, like some of Dumas' heroes, hating villany as a matter of course, but being by no means ashamed to acknowledge it, the Piedmontese was asked to supper. He came. Nevertheless, in the midst of the affair, when De Cameran was losing as fast as he could, Matta's conscience touched him: he awoke from a deep sleep, heard the dice shaking, saw the poor Savoyard losing, and advised him to play no more.

'Don't you know, count, you *cannot* win?'

'Why?' asked the count.

'Why, faith, because we are cheating you,' was the reply.

The chevalier turned round impatiently, 'Sieur Matta,' he cried, 'do you suppose it can be any amusement to Monsieur le Comte to be plagued with your ill-timed jests? For my part, I am so weary of the game that I swear by Jupiter I can scarcely play any more.' Nothing is more distasteful to a losing gamester than a hint of leaving off; so the count entreated the chevalier to continue, and assured him, that 'Monsieur Matta might say what he pleased, for it did not give him the least uneasiness to continue.'

The chevalier allowed the count to play upon credit, and that act of courtesy was taken very kindly: the dupe lost 1,500 pistoles, which he paid the next morning, when Matta was sharply reprimanded for his interference.

'Faith,' he answered, 'it was a point of conscience with me; besides it would have given me pleasure to have seen his

horse engaged with my infantry, if he had taken anything amiss.'

The sum thus gained set the spendthrifts up; and De Grammont satisfied his conscience by giving it away, to a certain extent, in charity. It is singular to perceive in the history of this celebrated man that moral taint of character which the French have never lost: this total absence of right reasoning on all points of conduct, is coupled in our Gallic neighbours with the greatest natural benevolence, with a generosity only kept back by poverty, with impulsive, impressionable dispositions, that require the guidance of a sound Protestant faith to elevate and correct them.

The chevalier hastened, it is related, to find out distressed comrades, officers who had lost their baggage, or who had been ruined by gaming; or soldiers who had been disabled in the trenches; and his manner of relieving them was as graceful and as delicate as the bounty he distributed was welcome. He was the darling of the army. The poor soldier knew him personally, and adored him; the general was sure to meet him in the scenes of action, and to seek his company in those of security.

And, having thus retrieved his finances, the gay-hearted chevalier used, henceforth, to make De Cameran go halves with him in all games in which the odds were in his own favour. Even the staid Calvinist, Turenne, who had not then renounced, as he did in after-life, the Protestant faith, delighted in the off-hand merriment of the chevalier. It was towards the end of the siege of Trino, that De Grammont went to visit that general in some new quarters, where Turenne received him, surrounded by fifteen or twenty officers. According to the custom of the day, cards were introduced, and the general asked the chevalier to play.

'Sir,' returned the young soldier, 'my tutor taught me that when a man goes to see his friends it is neither prudent to leave his own money behind him nor civil to take theirs.'

'Well,' answered Turenne, 'I can tell you you will find

neither much money nor deep play among us; but that it cannot be said that we allowed you to go off without playing, suppose we each of us stake a horse.'

De Grammont agreed, and, lucky as ever, won from the officers some fifteen or sixteen horses, by way of a joke; but seeing several faces pale, he said, 'Gentlemen, I should be sorry to see you go away from your general's quarters on foot; it will do very well if you all send me to-morrow your horses, except one, which I give for the cards.'

The *valet-de-chambre* thought he was jesting. 'I am serious,' cried the chevalier. '*Parole-d'honneur* I give a horse for the cards; and what's more, take which you please, only don't take mine.'

'Faith,' said Turenne, pleased with the novelty of the affair, 'I don't believe a horse was ever before given for the cards.'

Young people, and indeed old people, can perhaps hardly remember the time when, even in England, money used to be put under the candlesticks 'for the cards,' as it was said, but in fact for the servants, who waited. Winner or loser, the tax was to be paid, and this custom of vails was also prevalent in France.

Trino at last surrendered, and the two friends rushed from their campaigning life to enjoy the gaieties of Turin, at that time the centre of pleasure; and resolved to perfect their characters as military heroes—by falling in love, if respectably, well; if disreputably, well too, perhaps all the more agreeable, and venturesome, as they thought.

The court of Turin was then presided over by the Duchess of Savoy, *Madame Royale*, as she was called in France, the daughter of Henry IV. of France, the sister of Henrietta Maria of England. She was a woman of talent and spirit, worthy of her descent, and had certain other qualities which constituted a point of resemblance between her and her father; she was, like him, more fascinating than respectable.

The customs of Turin were rather Italian than French. At

that time every lady had her professed lover, who wore the liveries of his mistress, bore her arms, and sometimes assumed her very name. The office of the lover was, never to quit his lady in public, and never to approach her in private: to be on all occasions her esquire. In the tournament her chosen knight-cicisbeo came forth with his coat, his housings, his very lance distinguished with the ciphers and colours of her who had condescended to invest him with her preference. It was the remnant of chivalry that authorized this custom; but of chivalry demoralized—chivalry denuded of her purity, her respect, the chivalry of corrupted Italy, not of that which, perhaps fallaciously, we assign to the earlier ages.

Grammont and Matta enlisted themselves at once in the service of two beauties. Grammont chose for the queen of beauty, who was to 'rain influence' upon him, Mademoiselle de St. Germain, who was in the very bloom of youth. She was French, and, probably, an ancestress of that all-accomplished Comte de St. Germain, whose exploits so dazzled successive European courts, and the fullest account of whom, in all its brilliant colours, yet tinged with mystery, is given in the Memoirs of Maria Antoinette, by the Marquise d'Adhémar, her lady of the bed-chamber.

The lovely object of De Grammont's 'first love' was a radiant brunette belle, who took no pains to set off by art the charms of nature. She had some defects: her black and sparkling eyes were small; her forehead, by no means 'as pure as moonlight sleeping upon snow,' was not fair, neither were her hands; neither had she small feet—but her form generally was perfect; her elbows had a peculiar elegance in them; and in old times to hold the elbow out well, and yet not to stick it out, was a point of early discipline. Then her glossy black hair set off a superb neck and shoulders; and, moreover, she was gay, full of mirth, life, complaisance, perfect in all the acts of politeness, and invariable in her gracious and graceful bearing.

Matta admired her; but De Grammont ordered him to attach himself to the Marquise de Senantes, a married beauty of the court; and Matta, in full faith that all Grammont said and did was sure to succeed, obeyed his friend. The chevalier had fallen in love with Mademoiselle de St. Germain at first sight, and instantly arrayed himself in her colour, which was green, whilst Matta wore blue, in compliment to the marquise; and they entered the next day upon duty, at La Venerie, where the Duchess of Savoy gave a grand entertainment. De Grammont, with his native tact and unscrupulous mendacity, played his part to perfection; but his comrade, Matta, committed a hundred solecisms. The very second time he honoured the marquise with his attentions, he treated her as if she were his humble servant: when he pressed her hand, it was a pressure that almost made her scream. When he ought to have ridden by the side of her coach, he set off, on seeing a hare start from her form; then he talked to her of partridges when he should have been laying himself at her feet. Both these affairs ended as might have been expected. Mademoiselle de St. Germain was diverted by Grammont, yet he could not touch her heart. Her aim was to marry; his was merely to attach himself to a reigning beauty. They parted without regret; and he left the then remote court of Turin for the gayer scenes of Paris and Versailles. Here he became as celebrated for his alertness in play as for his readiness in repartee; as noted for his intrigues as he afterwards was for his bravery.

Those were stirring days in France. Anne of Austria, then in her maturity, was governed by Mazarin, the most artful of ministers, an Italian to the very heart's core, with a love of amassing wealth engrafted in his supple nature that amounted to a monomania. The whole aim of his life was gain. Though gaming was at its height, Mazarin never played for amusement; he played to enrich himself; and when he played, he cheated.

The Chevalier de Grammont was rich, and Mazarin wor-

shipped the rich. He was witty; and his wit soon procured him admission into the clique whom the wily Mazarin collected around him in Paris. Whatever were De Grammont's faults, he soon perceived those of Mazarin; he detected, and he detested the wily, grasping, serpent-like attributes of the Italian; he attacked him on every occasion on which a 'wit combat' was possible: he gracefully showed Mazarin off in his true colours. With ease he annihilated him, metaphorically, at his own table. Yet De Grammont had something to atone for: he had been the adherent and companion in arms of Condé; he had followed that hero to Sens, to Nordlingen, to Fribourg, and had returned to his allegiance to the young king, Louis XIV., only because he wished to visit the court at Paris. Mazarin's policy, however, was that of pardon and peace—of duplicity and treachery—and the chevalier seemed to be forgiven on his return to Paris, even by Anne of Austria. Nevertheless, De Grammont never lost his independence; and he could boast in after-life that he owed the two great cardinals who had governed France nothing that they could have refused. It was true that Richelieu had left him his abbacy; but he could not refuse it to one of De Grammont's rank. From Mazarin he had gained nothing except what he had won at play.

After Mazarin's death the chevalier intended to secure the favour of the king, Louis XIV., to whom, as he rejoiced to find, court alone was now to be paid. He had now somewhat rectified his distinctions between right and wrong, and was resolved to have no regard for favour unless supported by merit; he determined to make himself beloved by the courtiers of Louis, and feared by the ministers; to dare to undertake anything to do good, and to engage in nothing at the expense of innocence. He still continued to be eminently successful in play, of which he did not perceive the evil, nor allow the wickedness; but he was unfortunate in love, in which he was equally unscrupulous and more rash than at the gaming-table.

Among the maids of honour of Anne of Austria was a young lady named Anne Lucie de la Mothe Houdancourt. Louis, though not long married, showed some symptoms of admiration for this *débutante* in the wicked ways of the court.

Gay, radiant in the bloom of youth and innocence, the story of this young girl presents an instance of the unhappiness which, without guilt, the sins of others bring upon even the virtuous. The queen-dowager, Anne of Austria, was living at St. Germains when Mademoiselle de la Mothe Houdancourt was received into her household. The Duchess de Noailles, at that time *Grande Maîtresse*, exercised a vigilant and kindly rule over the maids of honour; nevertheless, she could not prevent their being liable to the attentions of Louis: she forbade him however to loiter, or indeed even to be seen in the room appropriated to the young damsels under her charge; and when attracted by the beauty of Anne Lucie de la Mothe, Louis was obliged to speak to her through a hole behind a clock which stood in a corridor.

Anne Lucie, notwithstanding this apparent encouragement of the king's addresses, was perfectly indifferent to his admiration. She was secretly attached to the Marquis de Richelieu, who had, or pretended to have, honourable intentions towards her. Everything was tried, but tried in vain, to induce the poor girl to give up all her predilections for the sake of a guilty distinction—that of being the king's mistress: even her *mother* reproached her with her coldness. A family council was held, in hopes of convincing her of her wilfulness, and Anne Lucie was bitterly reproached by her female relatives; but her heart still clung to the faithless Marquis de Richelieu, who, however, when he saw that a royal lover was his rival, meanly withdrew.

Her fall seemed inevitable; but the firmness of Anne of Austria saved her from her ruin. That queen insisted on

her being sent away; and she resisted even the entreaties of the queen, her daughter-in-law, and the wife of Louis XIV.; who, for some reason not explained, entreated that the young lady might remain at the court. Anne was sent away in a sort of disgrace to the convent of Chaïllot, which was then considered to be quite out of Paris, and sufficiently secluded to protect her from visitors. According to another account, a letter full of reproaches, which she wrote to the Marquis de Richelieu upbraiding him for his desertion, had been intercepted.

It was to this young lady that De Grammont, who was then, in the very centre of the court, 'the type of fashion and the mould of form,' attached himself to her as an admirer who could condescend to honour with his attentions those whom the king pursued. The once gay girl was thus beset with snares: on one side was the king, whose disgusting preference was shown when in her presence by sighs and sentiment; on the other, De Grammont, whose attentions to her were importunate, but failed to convince her that he was in love; on the other was the time-serving, heartless De Richelieu, whom her reason condemned but her heart cherished. She soon showed her distrust and dislike of De Grammont: she treated him with contempt; she threatened him with exposure, yet he would not desist: then she complained of him to the king. It was then that he perceived that though love could equalize conditions, it could not act in the same way between rivals. He was commanded to leave the court. Paris, therefore, Versailles, Fontainbleau, and St. Germains were closed against this gay chevalier; and how could he live elsewhere? Whither could he go? Strange to say, he had a vast fancy to behold the man who, stained with the crime of regicide, and sprung from the people, was receiving magnificent embassies from continental nations, whilst Charles II. was seeking security in his exile from the power of Spain in the Low Countries. He was eager to see

the Protector, Cromwell. But Cromwell, though in the height of his fame when beheld by De Grammont—though feared at home and abroad—was little calculated to win suffrages from a mere man of pleasure like De Grammont. The court, the city, the country, were in his days gloomy, discontented, joyless: a proscribed nobility was the sure cause of the thin though few festivities of the now lugubrious gallery of Whitehall. Puritanism drove the old jovial churchmen into retreat, and dispelled every lingering vestige of the old hospitality: long graces and long sermons, sanctimonious manners, and grim, sad faces, and sad-coloured dresses were not much to De Grammont's taste: he returned to France, and declared that he had gained no advantage from his travels. Nevertheless, either from choice or necessity, he made another trial of the damps and fogs of England.*

When he again visited our country, Charles II. had been two years seated on the throne of his father. Everything was changed, and the British court was in its fullest splendour; whilst the rejoicings of the people of England at the Restoration were still resounding through the land.

If one could include royal personages in the rather gay than worthy category of the 'wits and beaux of society,' Charles II. should figure at their head. He was the most agreeable companion, and the worst king imaginable. In the first place he was, as it were, a citizen of the world; tossed about by fortune from his early boyhood; a witness at the tender age of twelve of the battle of Edge Hill, where the celebrated Harvey had charge of him and of his brother. That inauspicious commencement of a wandering life had perhaps been amongst the least of his early trials. The fiercest was his long residence as a sort of royal prisoner in Scotland. A travelled, humbled man, he came back to

* M. de Grammont visited England during the Protectorate. His second visit, after being forbidden the court by Louis XIV., was in 1662.

England with a full knowledge of men and manners, in the prime of his life, with spirits unbroken by adversity, with a heart unsoured by that 'stern nurse,' with a gaiety that was always kindly, never uncourteous, ever more French than English; far more naturally did he appear as the son of Henrietta Maria than as the offspring of the thoughtful Charles.

In person, too, the king was then agreeable; though rather what the French would call *distingué* than dignified; he was, however, tall, and somewhat elegant, with a long French face, which in his youthood was plump and full about the lower part of the cheeks, but now began to sink into that well-known, lean, dark, flexible countenance, in which we do not, however, recognize the gaiety of the man whose very name brings with it associations of wit, politeness, good company, and all the attributes of a first-rate wit, except the almost inevitable ill-nature. There is in the physiognomy of Charles II. that melancholy which is often observable in the faces of those who are mere men of pleasure.

De Grammont found himself completely in his own sphere at Whitehall, where the habits were far more French than English. Along that stately Mall, overshadowed with umbrageous trees, which retains—and it is to be hoped ever will retain—the old name of the 'Birdcage Walk,' one can picture to oneself the king walking so fast that no one can keep up with him; yet stopping from time to time to chat with some acquaintances. He is walking to Duck Island, which is full of his favourite water-fowl, and of which he has given St. Evremond the government. How pleasant is his talk to those who attend him as he walks along; how well the quality of good-nature is shown in his love of dumb animals; how completely he is a boy still, even in that brown wig of many curls, and with the George and Garter on his breast! Boy, indeed, for he is followed by a litter of young spaniels: a little brindled greyhound frisks beside him; it is for that he

is ridiculed by the '*psalm*' sung at the Calves' Head Club: these favourites were cherished to his death.

> 'His dogs would sit in council boards
> Like judges in their seats:
> We question much which had most sense,
> The master or the curs.'

Then what capital stories Charles would tell, as he unbent at night amid the faithful, though profligate, companions of his exile! He told his anecdotes, it is true, over and over again, yet they were always embellished with some fresh touch—like the repetition of a song which has been encored on the stage. Whether from his inimitable art, or from his royalty, we leave others to guess, but his stories bore repetition again and again: they were amusing, and even novel to the very last.

To this seducing court did De Grammont now come. It was a delightful exchange from the endless ceremonies and punctilios of the region over which Louis XIV. presided. Wherever Charles was, his palace appeared to resemble a large hospitable house—sometimes town, sometimes country—in which every one did as he liked; and where distinctions of rank were kept up as a matter of convenience, but were only valued on that score.

Charles had modelled his court very much on the plan of that of Louis XIV., which he had admired for its gaiety and spirit. Corneille, Racine, Molière, Boileau, were encouraged by *le Grand Monarque*. Wycherley and Dryden were attracted by Charles to celebrate the festivities, and to amuse the great and the gay. In other points De Grammont found a resemblance. The queen-consort, Catherine of Braganza, was as complacent to her husband's vices as the queen of Louis. These royal ladies were merely first sultanas, and had no right, it was thought, to feel jealousy or to resent neglect. Each returning sabbath saw Whitehall lighted up,

and heard the tabors sound for a *branle*, (Anglicised 'brawl.') This was a dance which mixed up everybody, and called a brawl, from the foot being shaken to a quick time. Gaily did his Majesty perform it, leading to the hot exercise Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, stout and homely, and leaving Lady Castlemaine to his son the Duke of Monmouth. Then Charles, with ready grace, would begin the coranto, taking a single lady in this dance along the gallery. Lords and ladies one after another followed, and 'very noble,' writes Pepys, 'and great pleasure it was to see.' Next came the country dances, introduced by Mary Countess of Buckingham, the grandmother of the graceful duke who is moving along the gallery;—and she invented those once popular dances in order to introduce, with less chance of failure, her rustic country cousins, who could not easily be taught to carry themselves well in the brawl, or to step out gracefully in the coranto, both of which dances required practice and time. In all these dances the king shines the most, and dances much better than his brother the Duke of York.

In these gay scenes De Grammont met with the most fashionable belles of the court: fortunately for him they all spoke French tolerably; and he quickly made himself welcome amongst even the few—and few indeed there were—who plumed themselves upon untainted reputations. Hitherto those French noblemen who had presented themselves in England had been poor and absurd. The court had been thronged with a troop of impertinent Parisian coxcombs, who had pretended to despise everything English, and who treated the natives as if they were foreigners in their own country. De Grammont, on the contrary, was familiar with every one: he ate, he drank, he lived, in short, according to the custom of the country that hospitably received him, and accorded him the more respect, because they had been insulted by others.

He now introduced the *petits soupers*, which have never been understood anywhere so well as in France, and which

are even there dying out to make way for the less social and more expensive dinner; but, perhaps, he would even here have been unsuccessful, had it not been for the society and advice of the famous St. Evremond, who at this time was exiled in France and took refuge in England.

This celebrated and accomplished man had some points of resemblance with De Grammont. Like him, he had been originally intended for the church; like him he had turned to the military profession; he was an ensign before he was full sixteen; and had a company of foot given him after serving two or three campaigns. Like De Grammont, he owed the facilities of his early career to his being the descendant of an ancient and honourable family. St. Evremond was the Seigneur of St. Denis le Guast, in Normandy, where he was born.

Both these sparkling wits of society had at one time, and, in fact, at the same period, served under the great Condé; both were pre-eminent, not only in literature, but in games of chance. St. Evremond was famous at the University of Caen, in which he studied, for his fencing; and 'St. Evremond's pass' was well known to swordsmen of his time;—both were gay and satirical; neither of them pretended to rigid morals; but both were accounted men of honour among their fellow-men of pleasure. They were graceful, kind, generous.

In person St. Evremond had the advantage, being a Norman—a race which combines the handsomest traits of an English countenance with its blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin. Neither does the slight tinge of the Gallic race detract from the attractions of a true, well-born Norman, bred up in that province which is called the Court-end of France, and polished in the capital. Your Norman is hardy, and fond of field-sports: like the Englishman, he is usually fearless; generous, but somewhat crafty. You may know him by the fresh colour, the peculiar blue eye, long and large; by his

joyousness and look of health, gathered up even in his own marshy country, for the Norman is well fed, and lives on rich pasture-land, with cheapness and plenty around him. And St. Evremond was one of the handsomest specimens of this fine locality (so mixed up as it is with *us*); and his blue eyes sparkled with humour; his beautifully-turned mouth was all sweetness; and his noble forehead, the whiteness of which was set off by thick dark eyebrows, was expressive of his great intelligence, until a wen grew between his eyebrows, and so changed all the expression of his face that the Duchess of Mazarin used to call him the 'Old Satyr.' St. Evremond was also Norman in other respects: he called himself a thorough Roman Catholic, yet he despised the superstitions of his church, and prepared himself for death without them. When asked by an ecclesiastic sent expressly from the court of Florence to attend his death-bed, if he 'would be reconciled,' he answered, 'With all my heart; I would fain be reconciled to my stomach, which no longer performs its usual functions.' And his talk, we are told, during the fortnight that preceded his death, was not regret for a life we should, in seriousness, call misspent, but because partridges and pheasants no longer suited his condition, and he was obliged to be reduced to boiled meats. No one, however, could tell what might also be passing in his heart. We cannot always judge of a life, any more than of a drama, by its last scene; but this is certain, that in an age of blasphemy St. Evremond could not endure to hear religion insulted by ridicule. 'Common decency,' said this man of the world, 'and a due regard to our fellow-creatures, would not permit it.' He did not, it seems, refer his displeasure to a higher source—to the presence of the Omniscient,—who claims from us all not alone the tribute of our poor frail hearts in serious moments, but the deep reverence of every thought in the hours of careless pleasure.

It was now St. Evremond who taught De Grammont to collect around him the wits of that court, so rich in attrac-

tions, so poor in honour and morality. The object of St. Evremond's devotion, though he had at the æra of the Restoration passed his fiftieth year, was Hortense Mancini, once the richest heiress, and still the most beautiful woman in Europe, and a niece, on her mother's side, of Cardinal Mazarin's. Hortense had been educated, after the age of six, in France. She was Italian in her accomplishments, in her reckless, wild disposition, opposed to that of the French, who are generally calculating and wary even in their vices: she was Italian in the style of her surpassing beauty, and French to the core in her principles. Hortense, at the age of thirteen, had been married to Armand Duc de Meilleraye and Mayenne, who had fallen so desperately in love with this beautiful child, that he declared 'if he did not marry her he should die in three months.' Cardinal Mazarin, although he had destined his niece Mary to this alliance, gave his consent on condition that the duke should take the name of Mazarin. The cardinal died a year after this marriage, leaving his niece Hortense the enormous fortune of 1,625,000*l.*; yet she died in the greatest difficulties, and her corpse was seized by her creditors.

The Duc de Mayenne proved to be a fanatic, who used to waken his wife in the dead of the night to hear his visions; who forbade his child to be nursed on fast-days; and who believed himself to be inspired. After six years of wretchedness, poor Hortense petitioned for a separation and a division of property. She quitted her husband's home, and took refuge first in a nunnery, where she showed her unbelief or her irreverence, by mixing ink with holy-water, that the poor nuns might black their faces when they crossed themselves; or, in concert with Madame de Courcelles, another handsome married woman, she used to walk through the dormitories in the dead of night, with a number of little dogs barking at their heels; then she filled two great chests that were over the dormitories with water, which ran over, and, penetrating

through the chinks of the floor, wet the holy sisters in their beds. At length all this sorry gaiety was stopped by a decree that Hortense was to return to the Palais Mazarin; and to remain there until the suit for a separation should be decided. That the result should be favourable was doubtful: therefore, one fine night in June, 1667, Hortense escaped. She dressed herself in male attire, and, attended by a female servant, managed to get through the gate of Paris, and to enter a carriage. Then she fled to Switzerland; and, had not her flight been shared by the Chevalier de Rohan, one of the handsomest men in France, one could hardly have blamed an escape from a half-lunatic husband. She was only twenty-eight when, after various adventures, she came in all her unimpaired beauty to England. Charles was captivated by her charms, and, touched by her misfortunes, he settled on her a pension of 4,000*l.* a year, and gave her rooms in St. James's. Waller sang her praise:—

> 'When through the world fair Mazarine had run,
> Bright as her fellow-traveller, the sun:
> Hither at length the Roman eagle flies,
> As the last triumph of her conquering eyes.'

If Hortense failed to carry off from the Duchess of Portsmouth—then the star of Whitehall—the heart of Charles, she found, at all events, in St. Evremond one of those French, platonic, life-long friends, who, as Chateaubriand worshipped Madame Récamier, adored to the last the exiled niece of Mazarin. Every day, when in her old age and his, the warmth of love had subsided into the serener affection of pitying, and yet admiring friendship, St. Evremond was seen, a little old man in a black coif, carried along Pall Mall in a sedan chair, to the apartment of Madame Mazarin, in St. James's. He always took with him a pound of butter, made in his own little dairy, for her breakfast. When De Grammont was installed at the court of Charles, Hortense

was, however, in her prime. Her house at Chelsea, then a country village, was famed for its society and its varied pleasures. St. Evremond has so well described its attractions that his words should be literally given. 'Freedom and discretion are equally to be found there. Every one is made more at home than in his own house, and treated with more respect than at court. It is true that there are frequent disputes there, but they are those of knowledge and not of anger. There is play there, but it is inconsiderable, and only practised for its amusement. You discover in no countenance the fear of losing, nor concern for what is lost. Some are so disinterested that they are reproached for expressing joy when they lose, and regret when they win. Play is followed by the most excellent repasts in the world. There you will find whatever delicacy is brought from France, and whatever is curious from the Indies. Even the commonest meats have the rarest relish imparted to them. There is neither a plenty which gives a notion of extravagance, nor a frugality that discovers penury or meanness.'

What an assemblage it must have been! Here lolls Charles, Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Lord Dorset, the laziest, in matters of business or court advancement—the boldest, in point of frolic and pleasure, of all the wits and beaux of his time. His youth had been full of adventure and of dissipation. 'I know not how it is,' said Wilmot, Lord Rochester, 'but my Lord Dorset can do anything, and is never to blame.' He had, in truth, a heart; he could bear to hear others praised; he despised the arts of courtiers; he befriended the unhappy; he was the most engaging of men in manners, the most loveable and accomplished of human beings; at once poet, philanthropist, and wit; he was also possessed of chivalric notions, and of daring courage.

Like his royal master, Lord Dorset had travelled; and when made a gentleman of the bedchamber to Charles II., he was not unlike his sovereign in other traits; so full of

gaiety, so high-bred, so lax, so courteous, so convivial, that no supper was complete without him; no circle 'the right thing,' unless Buckhurst, as he was long called, was there to pass the bottle round, and to keep every one in good humour. Yet, he had misspent a youth in reckless immorality, and had even been in Newgate on a charge, a doubtful charge, it is true, of highway robbery and murder, but had been found guilty of manslaughter only. He was again mixed up in a disgraceful affair with Sir Charles Sedley. When brought before Sir Robert Hyde, then Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, his name having been mentioned, the judge inquired whether that was the Buckhurst lately tried for robbery? and when told it was, he asked him whether he had so soon forgotten his deliverance at that time: and whether it would not better become him to have been at his prayers begging God's forgiveness, than to come into such courses again?

The reproof took effect, and Buckhurst became what was then esteemed a steady man; he volunteered and fought gallantly in the fleet, under James Duke of York: and he completed his reform, to all outward show, by marrying Lady Falmouth.* Buckhurst, in society, the most good-tempered of men, was thus referred to by Prior, in his poetical epistle to Fleetwood Sheppard:—

> 'When crowding folks, with strange ill faces,
> Were making legs, and begging places;
> And some with patents, some with merit,
> Tired out my good Lord Dorset's spirit.'

Yet his pen was full of malice, whilst his heart was tender to all. Wilmot, Lord Rochester cleverly said of him:—

> 'For pointed satire I would Buckhurst chuse,
> The best good man with the worst-natured muse.'

* The Earl of Dorset married Elizabeth, widow of Charles Berkeley, Earl of Falmouth, and daughter of Hervey Bagot, Esq., of Pipe Hall, Warwickshire, who died without issue. He married, 7th March, 1684-5, Lady Mary Compton, daughter of James Earl of Northampton.

Still more celebrated as a beau and wit of his time, was John Wilmot, Lord Rochester. He was the son of Lord Wilmot, the cavalier who so loyally attended Charles II. after the Battle of Worcester; and, as the offspring of that royalist, was greeted by Lord Clarendon, then Chancellor of the University of Oxford, when he took his degree as Master of Arts, with a kiss.* The young nobleman then travelled, according to custom; and then, most unhappily for himself and for others, whom he corrupted by his example, he presented himself at the court of Charles II. He was at this time a youth of eighteen, and one of the handsomest persons of his age. The face of Buckhurst was hard and plain; that of De Grammont had little to redeem it but its varying intelligence; but the countenance of the young Earl of Rochester was perfectly symmetrical: it was of a long oval, with large, thoughtful, sleepy eyes; the eyebrows arched and high above them; the brow, though concealed by the curls of the now modest wig, was high and smooth; the nose, delicately shaped, somewhat aquiline; the mouth full, but perfectly beautiful, was set off by a round and well-formed chin. Such was Lord Rochester in his zenith; and as he came forward on state occasions, his false light curls hanging down on his shoulders—a cambric kerchief loosely tied, so as to let the ends, worked in point, fall gracefully down; his scarlet gown in folds over a suit of light steel armour—for men had become carpet knights then, and the coat of mail worn by the brave cavaliers was now less warlike, and was mixed up with robes, ruffles, and rich hose—and when in this guise he appeared at Whitehall, all admired; and Charles was enchanted with the simplicity, the intelligence, and modesty of one who was then an ingenuous youth, with good aspirations, and a staid and decorous demeanour.

Woe to Lady Rochester—woe to the mother who trusted

* Lord Rochester succeeded to the Earldom in 1659. It was created by Charles II. in 1652, at Paris.

her son's innocence in that vitiated court! Lord Rochester forms one of the many instances we daily behold, that it is the inexperienced, the ignorant, who fall most deeply, as well as most early, into temptation. He soon lost every trace of virtue—of principle, even of deference to received notions of propriety. For a while there seemed hopes that he would not wholly fall: courage was his inheritance, and he distinguished himself in 1665, when, as a volunteer, he went in quest of the Dutch East India fleet, and served with heroic gallantry under Lord Sandwich. And when he returned to court, there was a partial improvement in his conduct. He even looked back upon his former indiscretions with horror: he had now shared in the realities of life: he had grasped a high and honourable ambition; but he soon fell away—soon became almost a castaway. 'For five years,' he told Bishop Burnet, when on his death-bed, 'I was never sober.' His reputation as a wit must rest, in the present day, chiefly upon productions which have long since been condemned as unreadable. Strange to say, when not under the influence of wine, he was a constant student of classical authors, perhaps the worst reading for a man of his tendencies: all that was satirical and impure attracting him most. Boileau, among French writers, and Cowley among the English, were his favourite authors. He also read many books of physic; for long before thirty his constitution was so broken by his life, that he turned his attention to remedies, and to medical treatment; and it is remarkable how many men of dissolute lives take up the same sort of reading, in the vain hope of repairing a course of dissolute living. As a writer, his style was at once forcible and lively; as a companion, he was wildly vivacious: madly, perilously, did he outrage decency, insult virtue, profane religion. Charles II. liked him on first acquaintance, for Rochester was a man of the most finished and fascinating manners; but at length there came a coolness, and the witty courtier

was banished from Whitehall. Unhappily for himself he was recalled, and commanded to wait in London until his majesty should choose to re-admit him into his presence.

Disguises and practical jokes were the fashion of the day. The use of the mask, which was put down by proclamation soon after the accession of Queen Anne, favoured a series of pranks with which Lord Rochester, during the period of his living concealed in London, diverted himself. The success of his scheme was perfect. He established himself, since he could not go to Whitehall, in the City. 'His first design,' De Grammont relates, 'was only to be initiated into the mysteries of those fortunate and happy inhabitants; that is to say, by changing his name and dress, to gain admittance to their feasts and entertainments. . . . As he was able to adapt himself to all capacities and humours, he soon deeply insinuated himself into the esteem of the substantial wealthy aldermen, and into the affections of their more delicate, magnificent, and tender ladies: he made one in all their feasts, and at all their assemblies; and whilst in the company of the husbands, he declaimed against the faults and mistakes of government; he joined their wives in railing against the profligacy of the court ladies, and in inveighing against the king's mistresses: he agreed with them, that the industrious poor were to pay for these cursed extravagances; that the City beauties were not inferior to those at the other end of the town, . . . after which, to outdo their murmurings, he said, that he wondered Whitehall was not yet consumed by fire from heaven, since such rakes as Rochester, Killigrew, and Sidney were suffered there.'

This conduct endeared him so much to the City, and made him so welcome at their clubs, that at last he grew sick of their cramming, and endless invitations.

He now tried a new sphere of action; and instead of returning, as he might have done, to the court, retreated into the most obscure corners of the metropolis; and again

changing his name and dress, gave himself out as a German doctor named Bendo, who professed to find out inscrutable secrets, and to apply infallible remedies; to know, by astrology, all the past, and to foretell the future.

If the reign of Charles was justly deemed an age of high civilization, it was also one of extreme credulity. Unbelief in religion went hand in hand with blind faith in astrology and witchcraft; in omens, divinations, and prophecies: neither let us too strongly despise, in these their foibles, our ancestors. They had many excuses for their superstitions; and for their fears, false as their hopes, and equally groundless. The circulation of knowledge was limited: the public journals, that part of the press to which we now owe inexpressible gratitude for its general accuracy, its enlarged views, its purity, its information, was then a meagre statement of dry facts; an announcement, not a commentary. 'The Flying Post,' the 'Daily Courant,' the names of which may be supposed to imply speed, never reached lone country places till weeks after they had been printed on their one duodecimo sheet of thin coarse paper. Religion, too, just emerging into glorious light from the darkness of popery, had still her superstitions; and the mantle that priestcraft had contrived to throw over her exquisite, radiant, and simple form, was not then wholly and finally withdrawn. Romanism still hovered in the form of credulity.

But now, with shame be it spoken, in the full noonday genial splendour of our Reformed Church, with newspapers, the leading articles of which rise to a level with our greatest didactic writers, and are competent even to form the mind as well as to amuse the leisure hours of the young readers: with every species of direct communication, we yet hold to fallacies from which the credulous in Charles's time would have shrunk in dismay and disgust. Table-turning, spirit-rapping, *clairvoyance*, Swedenborgianism, and all that family of follies, would have been far too strong for the faith of those who

counted upon dreams as their guide, or looked up to the heavenly planets with a belief, partly superstitious, partly reverential, for their guidance; and in a dim and flickering faith trusted to their *stars*.

'Dr. Bendo,' therefore, as Rochester was called—handsome, witty, unscrupulous, and perfectly acquainted with the then small circle of the court—was soon noted for his wonderful revelations. Chamber-women, waiting-maids, and shop-girls were his first customers; but, very soon, gay spinsters from the court came in their hoods and masks to ascertain, with anxious faces, their fortunes; whilst the cunning, sarcastic 'Dr. Bendo,' noted in his diary all the intrigues which were confided to him by these lovely clients. La Belle Jennings, the sister of Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, was among his disciples; she took with her the beautiful Miss Price, and, disguising themselves as orange-girls, these young ladies set off in a hackney-coach to visit Dr. Bendo; but, when within half a street of the supposed fortune-teller's, were prevented by the interruption of a dissolute courtier named Brounker.

'Everything by turns and nothing long.' When Lord Rochester was tired of being an astrologer, he used to roam about the streets as a beggar: then he kept a footman who knew the Court well, and he used to dress him up in a red coat, supply him with a musket, like a sentinel, and send him to watch at the doors of all the fine ladies, to find out their goings on: afterwards, Lord Rochester would retire to the country, and write libels on these fair victims, and, one day, offered to present the king with one of his lampoons; but, being tipsy, gave Charles, instead, one written upon himself.

At this juncture we read with sorrow Bishop Burnet's forcible description of his career:—

'He seems to have freed himself from all impressions of virtue or religion, of honour or good-nature.... He had but one maxim, to which he adhered firmly, that he has to do every-

thing, and deny himself in nothing that might maintain his greatness. He was unhappily made for drunkenness, for he had drunk all his friends dead, and was able to subdue two or three sets of drunkards one after another; so it scarce ever appeared that he was disordered after the greatest drinking: an hour or two of sleep carried all off so entirely, that no sign of them remained. . . . This had a terrible conclusion.'

Like many other men, Rochester might have been saved by being kept far from the scene of temptation. Whilst he remained in the country he was tolerably sober, perhaps steady. When he approached Brentford on his route to London, his old propensities came upon him.

When scarcely out of his boyhood he carried off a young heiress, Elizabeth Mallet, whom De Grammont calls *La triste heritiere:* and triste, indeed, she naturally was. Possessed of a fortune of 2500*l.* a year, this young lady was marked out by Charles II. as a victim for the profligate Rochester. But the reckless young wit chose to take his own way of managing the matter. One night, after supping at Whitehall with Miss Stuart, the young Elizabeth was returning home with her grandfather, Lord Haly, when their coach was suddenly stopped near Charing Cross by a number of bravos, both on horseback and on foot—the 'Roaring Boys and Mohawks,' who were not extinct even in Addison's time. They lifted the affrighted girl out of the carriage, and placed her in one which had six horses; they then set off for Uxbridge, and were overtaken; but the outrage ended in marriage, and Elizabeth became the unhappy, neglected Countess of Rochester. Yet she loved him—perhaps in ignorance of all that was going on whilst *she* stayed with her four children at home.

'If,' she writes to him, 'I could have been troubled at anything, when I had the happiness of receiving a letter from you, I should be so, because you did not name a time

when I might hope to see you, the uncertainty of which very much afflicts me. . . . Lay your commands upon me what I am to do, and though it be to forget my children, and the long hope I have lived in of seeing you, yet will I endeavour to obey you; or in the memory only torment myself, without giving you the trouble of putting you in mind that there lives a creature as

'Your faithful, humble servant.'

And he, in reply: 'I went away (to Rochester) like a rascal, without taking leave, dear wife. It is an unpolished way of proceeding, which a modest man ought to be ashamed of. I have left you a prey to your own imaginations amongst my relations, the worst of damnations. But there will come an hour of deliverance, till when, may my mother be merciful unto you! So I commit you to what I shall ensue, woman to woman, wife to mother, in hopes of a future appearance in glory. . . .

'Pray write as often as you have leisure, to your

'ROCHESTER.'

To his son, he writes: 'You are now grown big enough to be a man, if you can be wise enough; and the way to be truly wise is to serve God, learn your book, and observe the instructions of your parents first, and next your tutor, to whom I have entirely resigned you for this seven years; and according as you employ that time, you are to be happy or unhappy for ever. I have so good an opinion of you, that I am glad to think you will never deceive me. Dear child, learn your book and be obedient, and you will see what a father I shall be to you. You shall want no pleasure while you are good, and that you may be good are my constant prayers.'

Lord Rochester had not attained the age of thirty, when he was mercifully awakened to a sense of his guilt here, his

peril hereafter. It seemed to many that his very nature was so warped that penitence in its true sense could never come to him; but the mercy of God is unfathomable; He judges not as man judges; He forgives, as man knows not how to forgive.

> 'God, our kind Master, merciful as just,
> Knowing our frame, remembers man is dust:
> He marks the dawn of every virtuous aim,
> And fans the smoking flax into a flame;
> He hears the language of a silent tear,
> And sighs are incense from a heart sincere.'

And the reformation of Rochester is a confirmation of the doctrine of a special Providence, as well as of that of a retribution even in this life.

The retribution came in the form of an early but certain decay; of a suffering so stern, so composed of mental and bodily anguish, that never was man called to repentance by a voice so distinct as Rochester. The reformation was sent through the instrumentality of one who had been a sinner like himself, who had sinned *with* him; an unfortunate lady, who, in her last hours, had been visited, reclaimed, consoled by Bishop Burnet. Of this, Lord Rochester had heard. He was then, to all appearance, recovering from his last sickness. He sent for Burnet, who devoted to him one evening every week of that solemn winter when the soul of the penitent sought reconciliation and peace.

The conversion was not instantaneous; it was gradual, penetrating, effective, sincere. Those who wish to gratify curiosity concerning the death-bed of one who had so notoriously sinned, will read Burnet's account of Rochester's illness and death with deep interest; and nothing is so interesting as a death-bed. Those who delight in works of nervous thought and elevated sentiments will read it too, and arise from the perusal gratified. Those, however, who are true, contrite Christians will go still farther; they will

own that few works so intensely touch the holiest and highest feelings; few so absorb the heart; few so greatly show the vanity of life; the unspeakable value of a purifying faith. 'It is a book which the critic,' says Dr. Johnson, 'may read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, the saint for its piety.'

Whilst deeply lamenting his own sins, Lord Rochester became anxious to redeem his former associates from theirs.

'When Wilmot, Earl of Rochester,'* writes William Thomas, in a manuscript preserved in the British Museum, 'lay on his death-bed, Mr. Fanshawe came to visit him, with an intention to stay about a week with him. Mr. Fanshawe, sitting by the bedside, perceived his lordship praying to God, through Jesus Christ, and acquainted Dr. Radcliffe, who attended my Lord Rochester in this illness and was then in the house, with what he had heard, and told him, that my lord was certainly delirious, for to his knowledge, he said, he believed neither in God nor in Jesus Christ. The doctor, who had often heard him pray in the same manner, proposed to Mr. Fanshawe to go up to his lordship to be further satisfied touching this affair. When they came to his room the doctor told my lord what Mr. Fanshawe said, upon which his lordship addressed himself to Mr. Fanshawe to this effect: "Sir, it is true, you and I have been very bad and profane together, and then I was of the opinion you mention. But now I am quite of another mind, and happy am I that I am so. I am very sensible how miserable I was whilst of another opinion. Sir, you may assure yourself that there is a Judge and a future state;" and so entered into a very handsome discourse concerning the last judgment, future state, &c., and concluded with a serious and pathetic exhortation to Mr. Fanshawe

* Mr. William Thomas, the writer of this statement, heard it from Dr. Radcliffe at the table of Speaker Harley, (afterwards Earl of Oxford,) 16th June, 1702.

to enter into another course of life; adding that he (Mr. F.) knew him to be his friend; that he never was more so than at this time; and "sir," said he "to use a Scripture expression, I am not mad, but speak the words of truth and soberness." Upon this Mr. Fanshawe trembled, and went immediately a-foot to Woodstock, and there hired a horse to Oxford, and thence took coach to London.'

There were other butterflies in that gay court; beaux without wit; remorseless rakes, incapable of one noble thought or high pursuit; and amongst the most foolish and fashionable of these was Henry Jermyn, Lord Dover. As the nephew of Henry Jermyn, Lord St. Albans, this young simpleton was ushered into a court life with the most favourable auspices. Jermyn Street (built in 1667) recalls to us the residence of Lord St. Albans, the supposed husband of Henrietta Maria. It was also the centre of fashion when Henry Jermyn the younger was launched into its unholy sphere. Near Eagle Passage lived at that time La Belle Stuart, Duchess of Richmond; next door to her Henry Savile, Rochester's friend. The locality has since been purified by worthier associations: Sir Isaac Newton lived for a time in Jermyn Street, and Gray lodged there.

It was, however, in De Grammont's time, the scene of all the various gallantries which were going on. Henry Jermyn was supported by the wealth of his uncle, that uncle who, whilst Charles II. was starving at Brussels, had kept a lavish table in Paris: little Jermyn, as the younger Jermyn was called, owed much indeed to his fortune, which had procured him great *éclat* at the Dutch court. His head was large; his features small; his legs short; his physiognomy was not positively disagreeable, but he was affected and trifling, and his wit consisted in expressions learnt by rote, which supplied him either with raillery or with compliments.

This petty, inferior being had attracted the regard of the Princess Royal—afterwards Princess of Orange—the daughter

of Charles I. Then the Countess of Castlemaine—afterwards Duchess of Cleveland—became infatuated with him; he captivated also the lovely Mrs. Hyde, a languishing beauty, whom Sir Peter Lely has depicted in all her sleepy attractions, with her ringlets falling lightly over her snowy forehead and down to her shoulders. This lady was, at the time when Jermyn came to England, recently married to the son of the great Clarendon. She fell desperately in love with this unworthy being; but, happily for her peace, he preferred the honour (or dishonour) of being the favourite of Lady Castlemaine, and Mrs. Hyde escaped the disgrace she, perhaps, merited.

De Grammont appears absolutely to have hated Jermyn; not because he was immoral, impertinent, and contemptible, but because it was Jermyn's boast that no woman, good or bad, could resist him. Yet, in respect to their unprincipled life, Jermyn and De Grammont had much in common. The count was at this time an admirer of the foolish beauty, Jane Middleton; one of the loveliest women of a court where it was impossible to turn without seeing loveliness.

Mrs. Middleton was the daughter of Sir Roger Needham; and she has been described, even by the grave Evelyn, as a 'famous, and, indeed, incomparable beauty.' A coquette, she was, however, the friend of intellectual men; and it was probably at the house of St. Evremond that the count first saw her. Her figure was good; she was fair and delicate; and she had so great a desire, Count Hamilton relates, to 'appear magnificently, that she was ambitious to vie with those of the greatest fortunes, though unable to support the expense.'

Letters and presents now flew about. Perfumed gloves, pocket looking-glasses, elegant boxes, apricot paste, essences, and other small wares arrived weekly from Paris: English jewellery still had the preference, and was liberally bestowed;

yet Mrs. Middleton, affected and somewhat precise, accepted the gifts but did not seem to encourage the giver.

The Count de Grammont, piqued, was beginning to turn his attention to Miss Warmestre, one of the queen's maids of honour, a lively brunette, and a contrast to the languid Mrs. Middleton; when, happily for him, a beauty appeared on the scene, and attracted him, by higher qualities than mere looks, to a real, fervent, and honourable attachment.

Amongst the few respected families of that period was that of Sir George Hamilton, the fourth son of James, Earl of Abercorn, and of Mary, grand-daughter of Walter, eleventh Earl of Ormond. Sir George had distinguished himself during the Civil Wars: on the death of Charles I. he had retired to France, but returned, after the Restoration, to London, with a large family, all intelligent and beautiful.

From their relationship to the Ormond family, the Hamiltons were soon installed in the first circles of fashion. The Duke of Ormond's sons had been in exile with the king; they now added to the lustre of the court after his return. The Earl of Arran, the second, was a beau of the true Cavalier order; clever at games, more especially at tennis, the king's favourite diversion; he touched the guitar well; and made love *ad libitum*. Lord Ossory, his elder brother, had less vivacity but more intellect, and possessed a liberal, honest nature, and an heroic character.

All the good qualities of these two young noblemen seem to have been united in Anthony Hamilton, of whom De Grammont gives the following character:—'The elder of the Hamiltons, their cousin, was the man who, of all the court, dressed best; he was well made in his person, and possessed those happy talents which lead to fortune, and procure success in love: he was a most assiduous courtier, had the most lively wit, the most polished manners, and the most punctual attention to his master imaginable; no person danced better, nor was any one a more general lover—a merit of some account

in a court entirely devoted to love and gallantry. It is not at all surprising that, with these qualities, he succeeded my Lord Falmouth in the king's favour.'

The fascinating person thus described was born in Ireland: he had already experienced some vicissitudes, which were renewed at the Revolution of 1688, when he fled to France —the country in which he had spent his youth—and died at St. Germains, in 1720, aged seventy-four. His poetry and his fairy tales are forgotten; but his 'Memoirs of the Count de Grammont' is a work which combines the vivacity of a French writer with the truth of an English historian.

Ormond Yard, St. James's Square, was the London residence of the Duke of Ormond: the garden-wall of Ormond House took up the greater part of York Street: the Hamilton family had a commodious house in the same courtly neighbourhood; and the cousins mingled continually. Here persons of the greatest distinction constantly met; and here the 'Chevalier de Grammont,' as he was still called, was received in a manner suitable to his rank and style; and soon regretted that he had passed so much time in other places; for, after he once knew the charming Hamiltons, he wished for no other friends.

There were three courts at that time in the capital; that at Whitehall, in the king's apartments; that in the queen's, in the same palace; and that of Henrietta Maria, the Queen Mother, as she was styled, at Somerset House. Charles's was pre-eminent in immorality, and in the daily outrage of all decency; that of the unworthy widow of Charles I. was just bordering on impropriety; that of Katharine of Braganza was still decorous, though not irreproachable. Pepys, in his Diary, has this passage:—'Visited Mrs. Ferrers, and stayed talking with her a good while, there being a little, proud, ugly, talking lady there, that was much crying up the queene-mother's court at Somerset House, above our queen's; there being before her no allowance of

De Grammont's Meeting with La Belle Hamilton. Vol. I., p. 87.

laughing and mirth that is at the other's; and, indeed, it is observed that the greatest court now-a-days is there. Thence to Whitehall, where I carried my wife to see the queene in her presence-chamber; and the maydes of honour and the young Duke of Monmouth, playing at cards.'

Queen Katherine, notwithstanding that the first words she was ever known to say in English were '*You lie!*' was one of the gentlest of beings. Pepys describes her as having a modest, innocent look, among all the demireps with whom she was forced to associate. Again we turn to Pepys, an anecdote of whose is characteristic of poor Katherine's submissive, uncomplaining nature:—

'With Creed, to the King's Head ordinary; . . . and a pretty gentleman in our company, who confirms my Lady Castlemaine's being gone from court, but knows not the reason; he told us of one wipe the queene, a little while ago, did give her, when she come in and found the queene under the dresser's hands, and had been so long. "I wonder your majesty," says she, "can have the patience to sit so long a-dressing?"—"I have so much reason to use patience," says the queene, "that I can very well bear with it."'

It was in the court of this injured queen that De Grammont went one evening to Mrs. Middleton's house: there was a ball that night, and amongst the dancers was the loveliest creature that De Grammont had ever seen. His eyes were riveted on this fair form; he had heard, but never till then seen her, whom all the world consented to call 'La Belle Hamilton,' and his heart instantly echoed the expression. From this time he forgot Mrs. Middleton, and despised Miss Warmestre: 'he found,' he said, that he 'had seen nothing at court till this instant.'

'Miss Hamilton,' he himself tells us, 'was at the happy age when the charms of the fair sex begin to bloom; she had the finest shape, the loveliest neck, and most beautiful arms in the world; she was majestic and graceful in all her move-

ments; and she was the original after which all the ladies copied in their taste and air of dress. Her forehead was open, white, and smooth; her hair was well set, and fell with ease into that natural order which it is so difficult to imitate. Her complexion was possessed of a certain freshness, not to be equalled by borrowed colours; her eyes were not large, but they were lively, and capable of expressing whatever she pleased.'* So far for her person; but De Grammont was, it seems, weary of mere external charms: it was the intellectual superiority that riveted his feelings, whilst his connoisseurship in beauty was satisfied that he had never yet seen any one so perfect.

'Her mind,' he says, 'was a proper companion for such a form: she did not endeavour to shine in conversation by those sprightly sallies which only puzzle, and with still greater care she avoided that affected solemnity in her discourses which produces stupidity; but, without any eagerness to talk, she just said what she ought, and no more. She had an admirable discernment in distinguishing between solid and false wit; and far from making an ostentatious display of her abilities, she was reserved, though very just in her decisions. Her sentiments were always noble, and even lofty to the highest extent, when there was occasion; nevertheless, she was less prepossessed with her own merit than is usually the case with those who have so much. Formed as we have described, she could not fail of commanding love; but so far was she from courting it, that she was scrupulously nice with respect to those whose merit might entitle them to form any pretensions to her.'

Born in 1641, Elizabeth—for such was the Christian name of this lovely and admirable woman—was scarcely in her twentieth year when she first appeared at Whitehall. Sir Peter Lely was at that time painting the Beauties of the Court, and had done full justice to the intellectual and yet innocent face that riveted De Grammont. He had depicted her with her rich

* See De Grammont's Memoirs.

dark hair, of which a tendril or two fell on her ivory forehead, adorned at the back with large pearls, under which a gauze-like texture was gathered up, falling over the fair shoulders like a veil: a full corsage, bound by a light band either of ribbon or of gold lace, confining, with a large jewel or button, the sleeve on the shoulder, disguised somewhat the exquisite shape. A frill of fine cambric set off, whilst in whiteness it scarce rivalled, the shoulder and neck.

The features of this exquisite face are accurately described by De Grammont, as Sir Peter has painted them. 'The mouth does not smile, but seems ready to break out into a smile. Nothing is sleepy, but everything is soft, sweet, and innocent in that face so beautiful and so beloved.'

Whilst the colours were fresh on Lely's palettes, James Duke of York, that profligate who aped the saint, saw it, and henceforth paid his court to the original, but was repelled with fearless *hauteur*. The dissolute nobles of the court followed his example, even to the 'lady-killer' Jermyn, but in vain. Unhappily for La Belle Hamilton, she became sensible to the attractions of De Grammont, whom she eventually married.

Miss Hamilton, intelligent as she was, lent herself to the fashion of the day, and delighted in practical jokes and tricks. At the splendid masquerade given by the queen she continued to plague her cousin, Lady Muskerry; to confuse and expose a stupid court beauty, a Miss Blaque; and at the same time to produce on the Count de Grammont a still more powerful effect than even her charms had done. Her success in hoaxing—which we should now think both perilous and indelicate—seems to have only riveted the chain, which was drawn around him more strongly.

His friend, or rather his foe, St. Evremond, tried in vain to discourage the chevalier from his new passion. The former tutor was, it appeared, jealous of its influence, and hurt that De Grammont was now seldom at his house.

De Grammont's answer to his remonstrances was very characteristic. 'My poor philosopher,' he cried, 'you understand Latin well—you can make good verses—you are acquainted with the nature of the stars in the firmament—but you are wholly ignorant of the luminaries in the terrestrial globe.'

He then announced his intention to persevere, notwithstanding all the obstacles which attached to the suit of a man without either fortune or character, who had been exiled from his own country, and whose chief mode of livelihood was dependent on the gaming-table.

One can scarcely read of the infatuation of La Belle Hamilton without a sigh. During a period of six years their marriage was in contemplation only; and De Grammont seems to have trifled inexcusably with the feelings of this once gay and ever lovely girl. It was not for want of means that De Grammont thus delayed the fulfilment of his engagement. Charles II., inexcusably lavish, gave him a pension of 1500 Jacobuses: it was to be paid to him until he should be restored to the favour of his own king. The fact was that De Grammont contributed to the pleasures of the court, and pleasure was the household deity of Whitehall. Sometimes, in those days of careless gaiety, there were promenades in Spring Gardens, or the Mall; sometimes the court beauties sallied forth on horseback; at other times there were shows on the river, which then washed the very foundations of Whitehall. There in the summer evenings, when it was too hot and dusty to walk, Old Thames might be seen covered with little boats, filled with court and city beauties, attending the royal barges; collations, music, and fireworks completed the scene, and De Grammont always contrived some surprise—some gallant show: once a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which he had privately brought from Paris, struck up unexpectedly: another time, a collation brought from the same gay capital surpassed that supplied by the king. Then the count, finding that coaches with glass windows, lately introduced, displeased

the ladies, because their charms were only partially seen in them, sent for the most elegant and superb *calèche* ever seen: it came after a month's journey, and was presented by De Grammont to the king. It was a royal present in price, for it had cost two thousand livres. The famous dispute between Lady Castlemaine and Miss Stuart, afterwards Duchess of Richmond, arose about this *calèche*. The Queen and the Duchess of York appeared first in it in Hyde Park, which had then recently been fenced in with brick. Lady Castlemaine thought that the *calèche* showed off a fine figure better than the coach; Miss Stuart was of the same opinion. Both these grown-up babies wished to have the coach on the same day, but Miss Stuart prevailed.

The Queen condescended to laugh at the quarrels of these two foolish women, and complimented the Chevalier de Grammont on his present. "But how is it,' she asked, 'that you do not even keep a footman, and that one of the common runners in the street lights you home with a link?'

'Madam,' he answered, 'the Chevalier de Grammont hates pomp: my link-boy is faithful and brave. Then he told the queen that he saw she was unacquainted with the nation of link-boys, and related how that he had, at one time, had one hundred and sixty around his chair at night, and people had asked "whose funeral it was?" As for the parade of coaches and footmen,' he added, 'I despise it. I have sometimes had five or six *valets-de-chambre*, without a single footman in livery except my chaplain.'

'How!' cried the queen, laughing, 'a chaplain in livery? surely he was not a priest.'

'*Pardon*, Madame, a priest, and the best dancer in the world of the Biscayan jig.'

'Chevalier,' said the king, 'tell us the history of your chaplain Poussatin.'

Then De Grammont related how, when he was with the great Condé, after the campaign of Catalonia, he had seen

among a company of Catalans, a priest in a little black jacket, skipping and frisking: how Condé was charmed, and how they recognized in him a Frenchman, and how he offered himself to De Grammont for his chaplain. De Grammont had not much need, he said, for a chaplain in his house, but he took the priest, who had afterwards the honour of dancing before Anne of Austria, in Paris.

Suitor after suitor interfered with De Grammont's at last honourable address to La Belle Hamilton. At length an incident occurred which had very nearly separated them for ever. Philibert de Grammont was recalled to Paris by Louis XIII. He forgot, Frenchman-like, all his engagements to Miss Hamilton, and hurried off. He had reached Dover, when her two brothers rode up after him. 'Chevalier de Grammont,' they said, 'have you forgotten nothing in London?'

'I beg your pardon,' he answered, 'I forgot to marry your sister.' It is said that this story suggested to Molière the idea of *Le Mariage forcé.* They were, however, married.

In 1669 La Belle Hamilton, after giving birth to a child, went to reside in France. Charles II., who thought she would pass for a handsome woman in France, recommended her to his sister, Henrietta Duchess of Orleans, and begged her to be kind to her.

Henceforth the Chevalier de Grammont and his wife figured at Versailles, where the Countess de Grammont was appointed *Dame de Palais.* Her career was less brilliant than in England. The French ladies deemed her haughty and old, and even termed her *une Anglaise insupportable.*

She had certainly too much virtue, and perhaps too much beauty still, for the Parisian ladies of fashion at that period to admire her.

She endeavoured, in vain, to reclaim her libertine husband, and to call him to a sense of his situation when he was on his death-bed. Louis XIV. sent the Marquis de Dangeau to convert him, and to talk to him on a subject little thought of by

De Grammont—the world to come. After the Marquis had been talking for some time, De Grammont turned to his wife and said, 'Countess, if you don't look to it, Dangeau will juggle you out of my conversion.' St. Evremond said he would gladly die to go off with so successful a bon-mot.

He became however, in time, serious, if not devout or penitent. Ninon de l'Enclos having written to St. Evremond that the Count de Grammont had not only recovered but had become devout, St. Evremond answered her in these words:—

'I have learned with a great deal of pleasure that the Count de Grammont has recovered his former health and acquired a new devotion.'*

A report having been circulated that De Grammont was dead, St. Evremond expressed deep regret. The report was contradicted by Ninon de l'Enclos. The count was then eighty-six years of age; 'nevertheless he was,' Ninon says, 'so young, that I think him as lively as when he hated sick people, and loved them after they had recovered their health;' a trait very descriptive of a man whose good-nature was

* 'The Count de Grammont fell dangerously ill in the year 1696, of which the King (Louis XIV.) being informed, and knowing, besides, that he was inclined to libertinism, he was pleased to send the Marquis of Dangeau to see how he did, and to advise him to think of God. Hereupon Count de Grammont, turning towards his wife, who had ever been a very devout lady, told her, "Countess, if you don't look to it, Dangeau will juggle you out of my conversion." Madame de l'Enclos having afterwards written to M. de St. Evremond that Count de Grammont was recovered, and turned devout—I have learned, answered he to her, with a great deal of pleasure, that Count de Grammont has recovered his former health, and acquired a new devotion. Hitherto I have been contented with being a plain honest man; but I must do something more; and I only wait for your example to become a devotee. You live in a country where people have wonderful advantages of saving their souls: there, vice is almost as opposite to the mode as virtue; sinning passes for ill-breeding, and shocks decency and good-manners, as much as religion. Formerly it was enough to be wicked, now one must be a scoundrel withal to be damned in France.'

always on the surface, but whose selfishness was deep as that of most wits and beaux, who are spoiled by the world, and who, in return, distrust and deceive the spoilers. This long life of eighty-six years, endowed as De Grammont was with elasticity of spirits, good fortune, considerable talent, an excellent position, a wit that never ceased to flow in a clear current; with all these advantages, what might he not have been to society, had his energy been well applied, his wit innocent, his talents employed worthily, and his heart as sure to stand muster as his manners?

BEAU FIELDING.

BEAU FIELDING.

'LET us be wise, boys, here's a fool coming,' said a sensible man, when he saw Beau Nash's splendid carriage draw up to the door. Is a beau a fool? Is a sharper a fool? Was Bonaparte a fool? If you reply 'no' to the last two questions, you must give the same answer to the first. A beau is a fox, but not a fool—a very clever fellow, who, knowing the weakness of his brothers and sisters in the world, takes advantage of it to make himself a fame and a fortune. Nash, the son of a glass-merchant—Brummell, the hopeful of a small shopkeeper—became the intimates of princes, dukes, and fashionables; were petty kings of Vanity Fair, and were honoured by their subjects. In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king; in the realm of folly, the sharper is a monarch. The only proviso is, that the cheat come not within the jurisdiction of the law. Such a cheat is the beau or dandy, or fine gentleman, who imposes on his public by his clothes and appearance. *Bonâ-fide* monarchs have done as much: Louis XIV. won himself the title of Le Grand Monarque by his manners, his dress, and his vanity. Fielding, Nash, and Brummell did nothing more. It is not a question whether such roads to eminence be contemptible or not, but whether their adoption in one station of life be more so than

in another. Was Brummell a whit more contemptible than 'Wales?' Or is John Thomas, the pride and glory of the 'Domestics' Free-and-Easy,' whose whiskers, figure, face, and manner are all superb, one atom more ridiculous than your recognized beau? I trow not. What right, then, has your beau to a place among wits? I fancy Chesterfield would be much disgusted at seeing his name side by side with that of Nash in this volume; yet Chesterfield had no objection, when at Bath, to do homage to the king of that city, and may have prided himself on exchanging pinches from diamond-set snuff-boxes with that superb gold-laced dignitary in the Pump-room. Certainly, people who thought little of Philip Dormer Stanhope thought a great deal of the glass-merchant's reprobate son when he was in power, and submitted without a murmur to his impertinences. The fact is, that the beaux and the wits are more intimately connected than the latter would care to own: the wits have all been, or aspired to be, beaux, and beaux have had their fair share of wit; both lived for the same purpose—to shine in society: both used the same means, coats, and bon-mots. The only distinction is, that the garments of the beaux were better, and their sayings not so good as those of the wits; while the conversation of the wits was better, and their apparel not so striking as those of the beaux. So, my Lord Chesterfield, who prided yourself quite as much on being a fine gentleman as on being a fine wit, you cannot complain at your proximity to Mr. Nash and others who *were* fine gentlemen, and would have been fine wits if they could.

Robert Fielding was, perhaps, the least of the beaux; but then, to make up for this, he belonged to a noble family; he married a duchess, and, what is more, he beat her. Surely in the kingdom of fools such a man is not to be despised. You may be sure he did not think he was, for was he not made the subject of two papers in 'The Tatler,' and what more could a man desire?

His father was a Suffolk squire, claiming relationship with the Earls of Denbigh, and, therefore, with the Hapsburgs, from whom the Beau and the Emperors of Austria had the common honour of being descended. Perhaps neither of them had sufficient sense to be proud of the greatest intellectual ornament of their race, the author of 'Tom Jones;' but as our hero was dead before the humorist was born, it is not fair to conjecture what he might have thought on the subject.

It does not appear that very much is known of this great gem of the race of Hapsburg. He had the misfortune to be very handsome, and the folly to think that his face would be his fortune: it certainly stood him in good stead at times, but it also brought him into a lamentable dilemma.

His father was not rich, and sent his son to the Temple to study laws which he was only fitted to break. The young Adonis had sense enough to see that destiny did not beckon him to fame in the gloom of a musty law court, and removed a little farther up to the Thames, and the more fashionable region of Scotland Yard. Here, where now Z. 300 repairs to report his investigations to a Commissioner, the young dandies of Charles II.'s day strutted in gay doublets, swore hasty oaths of choice invention, smoked the true Tobago from huge pipe-bowls, and ogled the fair but not too bashful dames who passed to and fro in their chariots. The court took its name from the royalties of Scotland, who, when they visited the South, were there lodged as being conveniently near to Whitehall Palace. It is odd enough that the three architects, Inigo Jones, Vanbrugh, and Wren, all lived in this yard.

It was not to be supposed that a man who could so well appreciate a handsome face and well-cut doublet as Charles II. should long overlook his neighbour, Mr. Robert Fielding, and in due course the Beau, who had no other diploma, found himself in the honourable position of a justice of the peace.

The emoluments of this office enabled Orlando, as 'The

Tatler' calls him, to shine forth in all his glory. With an enviable indifference to the future, he launched out into an expenditure which alone would have made him popular in a country where the heaviest purse makes the greatest gentleman. His lacqueys were arrayed in the brightest yellow coats with black sashes—the Hapsburg colours. He had a carriage, of course, but like Sheridan, whom his gave so much trouble to pay for, it was hired, though drawn by his own horses. This carriage was described as being shaped like a sea-shell; and 'The Tatler' calls it 'an open tumbril of less size than ordinary, to show the largeness of his limbs and the grandeur of his personage to the best advantage.' The said limbs were his especial pride: he gloried in the strength of his leg and arm; and when he walked down the street, he was followed by an admiring crowd, whom he treated with as much haughtiness as if he had been the emperor himself, instead of his cousin five hundred times removed. He used his strength to good or bad purpose, and was a redoubted fighter and bully, though good-natured withal. In the Mall, as he strutted, he was the cynosure of all female eyes. His dress had all the elegance of which the graceful costume of that period was capable, though Fielding did not, like Brummell, understand the delicacy of a quiet, but studied style. Those were simpler, somewhat more honest days. It was not necessary for a man to cloak his vices, nor be ashamed of his cloak. The beau then-a-day openly and arrogantly gloried in the grandeur of his attire; and bragging was a part of his character. Fielding was made by his tailor; Brummell made his tailor: the only point in common to both, was that neither of them paid the tailor's bill. The fine gentleman, under the Stuarts, was fine only in his lace and his velvet doublet; his language was coarser, his manners coarser, his vices the coarsest of all. No wonder when the king himself could get so drunk with Sedley and Buckhurst, as to be unable to give an audience appointed for; and when the

chief fun of his two companions was to divest themselves of all the habiliments which civilization has had the ill taste to make necessary, and in that state run about the streets.

Orlando wore the finest ruffles and the heaviest sword; his wig was combed to perfection; and in his pocket he carried a little comb with which to arrange it from time to time, even as the dandy of to-day pulls out his whiskers or curls his moustache. Such a man could not be passed over; and accordingly he numbered half the officers and gallants of the town among his intimates. He drank, swore, and swaggered, and the snobs of the day proclaimed him 'a complete gentleman.'

His impudence, however, was not always tolerated. In the playhouses of the day, it was the fashion for some of the spectators to stand upon the stage, and the places in that position were chiefly occupied by young gallants. The ladies came most in masques; but this did not prevent Master Fielding from making his remarks very freely, and in no very refined strain to them. The modest damsels, whom Pope has described,

> 'The fair sat pouting at the courtier's play,
> And not a mask went unimproved away:
> The modest fan was lifted up no more,
> And virgins smiled at what they blushed before,'

were not too coy to be pleased with the fops' attentions, and replied in like strain. The players were unheeded; the audience laughed at the improvised and natural wit, when carefully prepared dialogues failed to fix their attention. The actors were disgusted, and, in spite of Master Fielding's herculean strength, kicked him off the stage, with a warning not to come again.

The *rôle* of a beau is expensive to keep up; and our justice of the peace could not, like Nash, double his income by gaming. He soon got deep in debt, as every celebrated dresser has done. The old story, not new even in those days,

was enacted, and the brilliant Adonis had to keep watch and ward against tailors and bailiffs. On one occasion they had nearly caught him; but his legs being lengthy, he gave them fair sport as far as St. James's Palace, where the officers on guard rushed out to save their pet, and drove off the myrmidons of the law at the point of the sword.

But debts do not pay themselves, nor die, and Orlando with all his strength and prowess could not long keep off the constable. Evil days gloomed at no very great distance before him, and the fear of a sponging-house and debtors' prison compelled him to turn his handsome person to account. Had he not broken a hundred hearts already? had he not charmed a thousand pairs of beaming eyes? was there not one owner of one pair who was also possessed of a pretty fortune? Who should have the honour of being the wife of such an Adonis? who, indeed, but she who could pay highest for it; and who could pay with a handsome income but a well-dowered widow? A widow it must be—a widow it should be. Noble indeed was the sentiment which inspired this great man to sacrifice himself on the altar of Hymen for the good of his creditors. Ye young men in the Guards, who do this kind of thing every day—that is, every day that you can meet with a widow with the proper qualifications—take warning by the lamentable history of Mr. Robert Fielding, and never trust to 'third parties.'

A widow was found, fat, fair, and forty—and oh!—charm greater far than all the rest—with a fortune of sixty thousand pounds; this was a Mrs. Deleau, who lived at Whaddon in Surrey, and at Copthall-court in London. Nothing could be more charming; and the only obstacle was the absence of all acquaintance between the parties—for, of course, it was impossible for any widow, whatever her attractions, to be insensible to those of Robert Fielding. Under these circumstances, the Beau looked about for an agent, and found one in the person of a Mrs. Villars, hairdresser to the widow. He

offered this person a handsome douceur in case of success, and she was to undertake that the lady should meet the gentleman in the most unpremeditated manner. Various schemes were resorted to: with the *alias*, for he was not above an *alias*, of Major-General Villars, the Beau called at the widow's country house, and was permitted to see the gardens. At a window he espied a lady, whom he took to be the object of his pursuit—bowed to her majestically, and went away, persuaded he must have made an impression. But, whether the widow was wiser than wearers of weeds have the reputation of being, or whether the agent had really no power in the matter, the meeting never came off.

The hairdresser naturally grew anxious, the douceur was too good to be lost, and as the widow could not be had, some one must be supplied in her place.

One day while the Beau was sitting in his splendid 'night-gown,' as the morning-dress of gentlemen was then called, two ladies were ushered into his august presence. He had been warned of this visit, and was prepared to receive the yielding widow. The one, of course, was the hairdresser, the other a young, pretty, and *apparently* modest creature, who blushed much—though with some difficulty—at the trying position in which she found herself. The Beau, delighted, did his best to reassure her. He flung himself at her feet, swore, with oaths more fashionable than delicate, that she was the only woman he ever loved, and prevailed on the widow so far as to induce her to 'call again to-morrow.'

Of course she came, and Adonis was in heaven. He wrote little poems to her—for, as a gallant, he could of course make verses—serenaded her through an Italian donna, invited her to suppers, at which the delicacies of the season were served without regard to the purveyor's account, and to which, coy as she was, she consented to come, and clenched the engagement with a ring, on which was the motto, 'Tibi Soli.' Nay, the Beau had been educated, and had some knowledge of 'the

tongues,' so that he added to these attentions the further one of a song or two translated from the Greek. The widow ought to have been pleased, and was. One thing only she stipulated, namely, that the marriage should be private, lest her relations should forbid the banns.

Having brought her so far, it was not likely that the fortune-hunter would stick at such a mere trifle, and accordingly an entertainment was got up at the Beau's own rooms, a supper, suitable to the rank and wealth of the widow, provided by some obligingly credulous tradesman; a priest found—for, be it premised, our hero had changed so much of his religion as he had to change in the reign of James II., when Romanism was not only fashionable, but a sure road to fortune—and the mutually satisfied couple swore to love, honour, and obey one another till death them should part.

The next morning, however, the widow left the gentleman's lodgings, on the pretext that it was injudicious for her friends to know of their union at present, and continued to visit her sposo and sup somewhat amply at his chambers from time to time. We can imagine the anxiety Orlando now felt for a cheque-book at the heiress's bankers, and the many insinuations he may have delicately made, touching ways and means. We can fancy the artful excuses with which these hints were put aside by his attached wife. But the dupe was still in happy ignorance of the trick played on him, and for a time such ignorance was bliss. It must have been trying to him to be called on by Mrs. Villars for the promised douceur, but he consoled himself with the pleasures of hope.

Unfortunately, however, he had formed the acquaintance of a woman of a very different reputation to the real Mrs. Deleau, and the intimacy which ensued was fatal to him.

When Charles II. was wandering abroad, he was joined, among others, by a Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. The husband was a stanch old Romanist, with the qualities which usually accompanied that faith in those days—little respect for

morality, and a good deal of bigotry. In later days he was one of the victims of Titus Oates, but escaped, and eventually died in Wales in 1705, after having been James II.'s ambassador to Rome. This, in a few words, is the history of that Roger Palmer, afterwards Lord Castlemaine, who sold his wife—not at Smithfield, but at Whitehall—to His Majesty King Charles II., for the sum of one peerage—an Irish one, taken on consideration.

Mrs. Palmer belonged to one of the oldest families in England, and could trace her descent to Pagan de Villiers, in the days of William Rufus, and a good deal farther among the nobles of Normandy. She was the daughter of William, second Viscount Grandison, and rejoiced in the appropriate name of Barbara, for she *could* be savage occasionally. She was very beautiful, and very wicked, and soon became Charles's mistress. On the Restoration she joined the king in England, and when the poor neglected queen came over, was foisted upon her as bedchamber-woman, in spite of all the objections of that ill-used wife. It was necessary to this end that she should be the wife of a peer; and her low-minded husband actually accepted the title of Earl of Castlemaine, well knowing to what he owed it. Pepys, who admired Lady Castlemaine more than any woman in England, describes the husband and wife meeting at Whitehall with a cold ceremonial bow; yet the husband *was* there, using the court power which his own shame procured for him. A quarrel between the two, strangely enough on the score of religion, her ladyship insisting that her child should be christened by a Protestant clergyman, while his lordship insisted on the ceremony being performed by a Romish priest, brought about a separation, and from that time Lady Castlemaine, lodged in Whitehall, began her empire over the king of England. That man, 'who never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one,' was the slave of this imperious and most impudent of women. She forced him to settle on her an

immense fortune, much of which she squandered at the basset-table, often staking a thousand pounds at a time, and sometimes losing fifteen thousand pounds a-night.

Nor did her wickedness end here. We have some pity for one, who, like La Vallière, could be attracted by the attentions of a handsome fascinating prince: we pity, though we blame. But Lady Castlemaine was vicious to the very marrow: not content with a king's favour, she courted herself the young gallant of the town. Quarrels ensued between Charles and his mistress, in which the latter invariably came off victorious, owing to her indomitable temper; and the scenes recorded by De Grammont—when she threatened to burn down Whitehall, and tear her children in pieces—are too disgraceful for insertion. She forced the reprobate monarch to consent to all her extortionate demands; rifled the nation's pockets as well as his own; and at every fresh difference, forced Charles to give her some new pension. An intrigue with Jermyn, discovered and objected to by the king, brought on a fresh and more serious difference, which was only patched up by a patent of the Duchy of Cleveland. The Duchess of Cleveland was even worse than the Countess of Castlemaine. Abandoned in time by Charles, and detested by all people of any decent feeling, she consoled herself for the loss of a real king by taking up with a stage one. Hart and Goodman, the actors, were successively her cavalieri: the former had been a captain in the army; the latter a student at Cambridge. Both were men of the coarsest minds and most depraved lives. Goodman, in after-years was so reduced that, finding, as Sheridan advised his son to do, a pair of pistols handy, a horse saddled, and Hounslow Heath not a hundred miles distant, he took to the pleasant and profitable pastime of which Dick Turpin is the patron saint. He was all but hanged by his daring robberies, but unfortunately not quite so. He lived to suffer such indigence, that he and another rascal had but one under-garment between them, and entered into a compact that one should lie

in bed while the other wore the article in question. Naturally enough the two fell out in time, and the end of Goodman—sad misnomer—was worse than his beginning: such was the gallant whom the imperious Duchess of Cleveland vouchsafed to honour.

The life of the once beautiful Barbara Villiers grew daily more and more depraved: at the age of thirty she retired to Paris, shunned and disgraced. After numerous intrigues, abroad and at home, she put the crowning point to her follies by falling in love with the handsome Fielding, when she herself numbered sixty-five summers.

Whether the Beau still thought of fortune, or whether having once tried matrimony, he was so enchanted with it as to make it his cacoethes, does not appear: the legend explains not for what reason he married the antiquated beauty only three weeks after he had been united to the supposed widow. For a time he wavered between the two, but that time was short: the widow discovered his second marriage, claimed him, and in so doing revealed the well-kept secret that she was not a widow; indeed, not even the relict of John Deleau, Esq., of Whaddon, but a wretched adventurer of the name of Mary Wadsworth, who had shared with Mrs. Villars the plunder of the trick. The Beau tried to preserve his dignity, and throw over his duper, but in vain. The first wife reported the state of affairs to the second; and the duchess, who had been shamefully treated by Master Fielding, was only too glad of an opportunity to get rid of him. She offered Mary Wadsworth a pension of a 100*l.* a year, and a sum of 200*l.* in ready money, to prove the previous marriage. The case came on, and Beau Fielding had the honour of playing a part in a famous state trial.

With his usual impudence he undertook to defend himself at the Old Bailey, and hatched up some old story to prove that the first wife was married at the time of their union to one Brady; but the plea fell to the ground, and the fine gen-

tleman was sentenced to be burnt in the hand. His interest in certain quarters saved him this ignominious punishment, which would, doubtless, have spoiled a limb of which he was particularly proud. He was pardoned: the real widow married a far more honourable gentleman, in spite of the unenviable notoriety she had acquired; the sham one was somehow quieted, and the duchess died some four years later, the more peacefully for being rid of her tyrannical mate.

Thus ended a pretty scandal of the day, in which all the parties were so disreputable that no one could feel any sympathy for a single one of them. How the dupe himself ended is not known. The last days of fops and beaux are never glorious. Brummell died in slovenly penury; Nash in contempt. Fielding lapsed into the dimmest obscurity; and as far as evidence goes, there is as little certainty about his death as of that of the Wandering Jew. Let us hope that he is not still alive: though his friends seem to have cared little whether he were so or not, to judge from a couple of verses written by one of them:—

'If Fielding is dead,
And rests under this stone,
Then he is not alive
You may bet two to one.

'But if he's alive,
And does not lie there—
Let him live till he's hanged,
For which no man will care.'

OF CERTAIN CLUBS AND CLUB-WITS UNDER ANNE.

OF CERTAIN CLUBS AND CLUB-WITS UNDER ANNE.

I SUPPOSE that, long before the building of Babel, man discovered that he was an associative animal, with the universal motto, '*L'union c'est la force;*' and that association, to be of any use, requires talk. A history of celebrated associations, from the building society just mentioned down to the thousands which are represented by an office, a secretary, and a brass-plate, in the present day, would give a curious scheme of the natural tendencies of man; while the story of their failures—and how many have not failed, sooner or later!—would be a pretty moral lesson to your anthropolaters who Babelize now-a-days, and believe there is nothing which a company with capital cannot achieve. I wonder what object there is, that two men can possibly agree in desiring, and which it takes more than one to attain, for which an association of some kind has not been formed at some time or other, since first the swarthy savage learned that it was necessary to unite to kill the lion which infested the neighbourhood! Alack for human nature! I fear by far the larger proportion of the objects of associations would be found rather evil than good, and, certes, nearly all of them might be ranged under two heads, according as the passions of hate

or desire found a common object in several hearts. Gain on the one hand—destruction on the other—have been the chief motives of clubbing in all time.

A delightful exception is to be found, though—to wit, in associations for the purpose of talking. I do not refer to parliaments and philosophical academies, but to those companies which have been formed for the sole purpose of mutual entertainment by interchange of thought.

Now, will any kind reader oblige me with a derivation of the word 'Club?' I doubt if it is easy to discover. But one thing is certain, whatever its origin, it is, in its present sense, purely English in idea and in existence. Dean Trench points this out, and, noting the fact that no other nation (he might have excepted the Chinese) has any word to express this kind of association, he has, with very pardonable natural pride, but unpardonably bad logic, inferred that the English are the most sociable people in the world. The contrary is true; nay, *was* true, even in the days of Addison, Swift, Steele—even in the days of Johnson, Walpole, Selwyn; ay, at all time since we have been a nation. The fact is, we are not the most sociable, but the most associative race; and the establishment of clubs is a proof of it. We cannot, and never could, talk freely, comfortably, and generally, without a company for talking. Conversation has always been with us as much a business as railroad-making, or what not. It has always demanded certain accessories, certain condiments, certain stimulants to work it up to the proper pitch. 'We all know' we are the cleverest and wittiest people under the sun; but then our wit has been stereotyped. France has no 'Joe Miller;' for a bon-mot there, however good, is only appreciated historically. Our wit is printed, not spoken: our best wits behind an inkhorn have sometimes been the veriest logs in society. On the Continent clubs were not called for, because society itself was the arena of conversation. In this country, on the other hand, a man could only chat when at

his ease; could only be at his ease among those who agreed with him on the main points of religion and politics, and even then wanted the aid of a bottle to make him comfortable. Our want of sociability was the cause of our clubbing, and therefore the word 'club' is purely English.

This was never so much the case as after the Restoration. Religion and politics never ran higher than when a monarch, who is said to have died a papist because he had no religion at all during his life, was brought back to supplant a furious puritanical Protectorate. Then, indeed, it was difficult for men of opposite parties to meet without bickering; and society demanded separate meeting-places for those who differed. The origin of clubs in this country is to be traced to two causes—the vehemence of religious and political partisanship, and the establishment of coffee-houses. These certainly gave the first idea of clubbery. The taverns which preceded them had given the English a zest for public life in a small way. 'The Mermaid' was, virtually, a club of wits long before the first real club was opened, and, like the clubs of the eighteenth century, it had its presiding geniuses in Shakespere and Rare Ben.

The coffee-houses introduced somewhat more refinement and less exclusiveness. The oldest of these was the 'Grecian.' 'One Constantine, a Grecian,' advertised in 'The Intelligencer' of January 23rd, 1664-5, that 'the right coffee bery or chocolate,' might be had of him 'as cheap and as good as is anywhere to be had for money,' and soon after began to sell the said 'coffee bery' in small cups at his own establishment in Devereux Court, Strand. Some two years later we have news of 'Will's,' the most famous, perhaps, of the coffee-houses. Here Dryden held forth with pedantic vanity; and here was laid the first germ of that critical acumen which has since become a distinguishing feature in English literature. Then, in the City, one Garraway, of Exchange Alley, first sold 'tea in leaf and drink, made according to the

directions of the most knowing, and travellers into those eastern countries;' and thus established the well-known 'Garraway's,' whither, in Defoe's day, 'foreign banquiers' and even ministers resorted, to drink the said beverage. 'Robin's,' 'Jonathan's,' and many another, were all opened about this time, and the rage for coffee-house life became general throughout the country.

In these places the company was of course of all classes and colours; but, as the conversation was general, there was naturally at first a good deal of squabbling, till, for the sake of peace and comfort, a man chose his place of resort according to his political principles; and a little later there were regular Whig and Tory coffee-houses. Thus, in Anne's day, 'The Cocoa-nut,' in St. James's Street, was reserved for Jacobites, while none but Whigs frequented 'The St. James's.' Still there was not sufficient exclusiveness; and as early as in Charles II.'s reign men of peculiar opinions began to appropriate certain coffee-houses at certain hours, and to exclude from them all but approved members. Hence the origin of clubs.

The October Club was one of the earliest, being composed of some hundred and fifty rank Tories, chiefly country members of Parliament. They met at the 'Bell,' in King Street, Westminster, that street in which Spenser starved, and Dryden's brother kept a grocer's shop. A portrait of Queen Anne, by Dahl, hung in the club-room. This and the Kit-kat, the great Whig club, were chiefly reserved for politics; but the fashion of clubbing having once come in, it was soon followed by people of all fancies. No reader of the 'Spectator' can fail to remember the ridicule to which this was turned by descriptions of imaginary clubs for which the qualifications were absurd, and of which the business, on meeting, was preposterous nonsense of some kind. The idea of such fraternities, as the Club of Fat Men, the Ugly Club, the Sheromp Club, the Everlasting Club, the Sighing Club, the Amorous

Club, and others, could only have been suggested by real clubs almost as ridiculous. The names, too, were almost as fantastical as those of the taverns in the previous century, which counted 'The Devil,' and 'The Heaven and Hell,' among their numbers. Many derived their titles from the standing dishes preferred at supper, the Beef-steak and the Kit-kat (a sort of mutton-pie), for instance.

The Beef-steak Club, still in existence, was one of the most famous established in Anne's reign. It had at that time less of a political than a jovial character. Nothing but that excellent British fare, from which it took its name, was, at first, served at the supper-table. It was an assemblage of wits of every station, and very jovial were they supposed to be when the juicy dish had been discussed. Early in the century, Estcourt, the actor, was made providore to this club, and wore a golden gridiron as a badge of office, and is thus alluded to in Dr. King's 'Art of Cookery' (1709):—

> 'He that of honour, wit, and mirth partakes,
> May be a fit companion o'er beef-steaks;
> His name may be to future times enrolled
> In Estcourt's book, whose gridiron's framed of gold.'

Estcourt was one of the best mimics of the day, and a keen satirist to boot: in fact he seems to have owed much of his success on the stage to his power of imitation, for while his own manner was inferior, he could at pleasure copy exactly that of any celebrated actor. He *would* be a player. At fifteen he ran away from home, and joining a strolling company, acted Roxana in woman's clothes: his friends pursued him, and, changing his dress for that of a girl of the time, he tried to escape them, but in vain. The histrionic youth was captured, and bound apprentice in London town; the "seven long years" of which did not cure him of the itch for acting. But he was too good a wit for the stage, and amused himself, though not always his audience, by interspersing his part

with his own remarks. The great took him by the hand, and old Marlborough especially patronized him: he wrote a burlesque of the Italian operas then beginning to be in vogue; and died in 1712-13. Estcourt was not the only actor belonging to the Beef-steak, nor even the only one who had concealed his sex under emergency; Peg Woffington, who had made as good a boy as he had done a girl, was afterwards a member of this club.

In later years the beef-steak was cooked in a room at the top of Covent Garden Theatre, and counted many a celebrated wit among those who sat around its cheery dish. Wilkes the blasphemer, Churchill, and Lord Sandwich, were all members of it at the same time. Of the last, Walpole gives us information in 1763 at the time of Wilkes' duel with Martin in Hyde Park. He tells us that at the Beef-steak Club Lord Sandwich talked so profusely, 'that he drove harlequins out of the company.' To the honour of the club be it added, that his lordship was driven out after the harlequins, and finally expelled: it is sincerely to be hoped that Wilkes was sent after his lordship. This club is now represented by one held behind the Lyceum, with the thoroughly British motto, 'Beef and Liberty:' the name was happily chosen, and therefore imitated. In the reign of George II. we meet with a 'Rump-steak, or Liberty Club;' and somehow steaks and liberty seem to be the two ideas most intimately associated in the Britannic mind. Can any one explain it?

Other clubs there were under Anne,—political, critical, and hilarious—but the palm is undoubtedly carried off by the glorious Kit-kat.

It is not every eating-house that is immortalized by a Pope, though Tennyson has sung 'The Cock' with its 'plump head-waiter,' who, by the way, was mightily offended by the Laureate's verses—or pretended to be so—and thought it 'a great liberty of Mr. ——, Mr. ——, what is his name? to put respectable private characters into his books.' Pope, or

some say Arbuthnot, explained the etymology of this club's extraordinary title:—

'Whence deathless Kit-kat took its name,
Few critics can unriddle:
Some say from pastrycook it came,
And some from Cat and Fiddle.

'From no trim beaux its name it boasts,
Grey statesmen or green wits;
But from the pell-mell pack of toasts
Of old cats and young kits.'

Probably enough the title was hit on at hap-hazard, and retained because it was singular, but as it has given a poet a theme, and a painter a name for pictures of a peculiar size, its etymology has become important. Some say that the pastrycook in Shire Lane, at whose house it was held, was named Christopher Katt. Some one or other was certainly celebrated for the manufacture of that forgotten delicacy, a mutton-pie, which acquired the name of a Kit-kat.

'A Kit-kat is a supper for a lord,'

says a comedy of 1700, and certes it afforded at this club evening nourishment for many a celebrated noble profligate of the day. The supposed sign of the Cat and Fiddle (Kitt), gave another solution, but after all, Pope's may be satisfactorily received.

The Kit-kat was, *par excellence*, the Whig Club of Queen Anne's time: it was established at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was then composed of thirty-nine members, among whom were the Dukes of Marlborough, Devonshire, Grafton, Richmond, and Somerset. In later days, it numbered the greatest wits of the age, of whom anon.

This club was celebrated more than any for its *toasts*.

Now, if men must drink—and sure the vine was given us for use, I do not say for abuse—they had better make it an

occasion of friendly intercourse; nothing can be more degraded than the solitary sanctimonious toping in which certain of our Northern brethren are known to indulge. They had better give to the quaffing of that rich gift, sent to be a medicine for the mind, to raise us above the perpetual contemplation of worldly ills, as much of romance and elegance as possible. It is the opener of the heart, the awakener of nobler feelings of generosity and love, the banisher of all that is narrow, and sordid, and selfish; the herald of all that is exalted in man. No wonder that the Greeks made a god of Bacchus, that the Hindu worshipped the mellow Soma, and that there has been scarce a poet who has not sung its praise. There was some beauty in the feasts of the Greeks, when the goblet was really wreathed with flowers; and even the German student, dirty and drunken as he may be, removes half the stain from his orgies with the rich harmony of his songs, and the hearty good-fellowship of his toasts. We drink still, perhaps we shall always drink till the end of time, but all the romance of the bowl is gone; the last trace of its beauty went with the frigid abandonment of the toast.

There was some excuse for wine when it brought out that now forgotten expression of good-will. Many a feud was reconciled in the clinking of glasses; just as many another was begun when the cup was drained too deeply. The first quarter of the last century saw the end of all the social glories of the wassail in this country, and though men drank as much fifty years later, all its poetry and romance had then disappeared.

It was still, however, the custom at that period to call on the name of some fair maiden, and sing her praises over the cup as it passed. It was a point of honour for all the company to join the health. Some beauties became celebrated for the number of their toasts; some even standing toasts among certain sets. In the Kit-kat Club the custom was carried out by rule, and every member was compelled to name a beauty, whose claims to the honour were then dis-

cussed, and if her name was approved, a separate bowl was consecrated to her, and verses to her honour engraved on it. Some of the most celebrated toasts had even their portraits hung in the club-room, and it was no slight distinction to be the favourite of the Kit-kat. When only eight years old, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu enjoyed this privilege. Her father, the Lord Dorchester, afterwards Evelyn, Duke of Kingston, in a fit of caprice, proposed 'the pretty little child' as his toast. The other members, who had never seen her, objected; the Peer sent for her, and there could no longer be any question. The forward little girl was handed from knee to knee, petted, probably, by Addison, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Garth, and many another famous wit. Another celebrated toast of the Kit-kat, mentioned by Walpole, was Lady Molyneux, who, he says, died smoking a pipe.

This club was no less celebrated for its portraits than for the ladies it honoured. They, the portraits, were all painted by Kneller, and all of one size, which thence got the name of Kit-kat; they were hung round the club-room. Jacob Tonson, the publisher, was secretary to the club.

Defoe tells us the Kit-kat held the first rank among the clubs of the early part of the last century, and certainly the names of its members comprise as many wits as we could expect to find collected in one society.

Addison must have been past fifty when he became a member of the Kit-kat. His 'Cato' had won him the general applause of the Whig party, who could not allow so fine a writer to slip from among them. He had long, too, played the courtier, and was 'quite a gentleman.' A place among the exclusives of the Kit-kat was only the just reward of such attainments, and he had it. I shall not be asked to give a notice of a man so universally known, and one who ranks rather with the humourists than the wits. It will suffice to say, that it was not till *after* the publication of the 'Spectator,' and some time after, that he joined our society.

Congreve I have chosen out of this set for a separate life, for this man happens to present a very average sample of all their peculiarities. Congreve was a literary man, a poet, a wit, a beau, and—what unhappily is quite as much to the purpose—a profligate. The only point he, therefore, wanted in common with most of the members, was a title; but few of the titled members combined as many good and bad qualities of the Kit-kat kind as did William Congreve.

Another dramatist, whose name seems to be inseparable from Congreve's, was that mixture of bad and good taste—Vanbrugh. This author of 'The Relapse,' the most licentious play ever acted, and builder of Blenheim, the ugliest house ever erected, was a man of good family, and Walpole counts him among those who 'wrote genteel comedy, because they lived in the best company.' We doubt the logic of this; but if it hold, how is it that Van wrote plays which the best company, even of that age, condemned, and neither good nor bad company can read in the present day without being shocked? If the conversation of the Kit-kat was anything like that in this member's comedies, it must have been highly edifying. However, I have no doubt Mr. Van passed for a gentleman, whatever his conversation, and he was certainly a wit, and apparently somewhat less licentious in his morals than the rest. Yet what Pope said of his literature may be said, too, of some acts of his life:—

'How Van wants grace, who never wanted wit.'

And his quarrel with 'Queen Sarah' of Marlborough, though the duchess was by no means the most agreeable woman in the world to deal with, is not much to Van's honour. When the nation voted half a million to build that hideous mass of stone, the irregular and unsightly piling of which caused Walpole to say that the architect 'had emptied quarries, rather than built houses,' and Dr. Evans to write this epitaph for the builder—

'Lie heavy on him, Earth, for he
Laid many a heavy load on thee,'

Sarah haggled over 'seven-pence halfpenny a bushel:' Van retorted by calling her 'stupid and troublesome,' and 'that wicked woman of Marlborough,' and after the Duke's death, wrote that the Duke had left her 'twelve thousand pounds a-year to keep herself clean and go to law.' Whether she employed any portion of it on the former object we do not pretend to say, but she certainly spent as much as a miser could on litigation, Van himself being one of the unfortunates she attacked in this way.

The events of Vanbrugh's life were varied. He began life in the army, but in 1697 gave the stage 'The Relapse.' It was sufficiently successful to induce him to follow it up with the 'Provoked Wife,' one of the wittiest pieces produced in those days. Charles, Earl of Carlisle, Deputy Earl Marshal, for whom he built Castle Howard, made him Clarencieux King-at-arms in 1704, and he was knighted by George I., 9th September, 1714. In 1705, he joined Congreve in the management of the Haymarket, which he himself built. George I. made him Comptroller-general of the royal works. He had even an experience of the Bastille, where he was confined for sketching fortifications in France. He died in 1726, with the reputation of a good wit, and a bad architect. His conversation was, certainly, as light as his buildings were heavy.

Another member, almost as well known in his day, was Sir Samuel Garth, the physician, 'well-natured Garth,' as Pope called him. He won his fame by a satire on the apothecaries in the shape of a poem called 'The Dispensary.' When delivering the funeral oration over Dryden's body, which had been so long unburied that its odour began to be disagreeable, he mounted a tub, the top of which fell through and left the doctor in rather an awkward position. He gained admission to the Kit-kat in consequence of a vehement eulogy on King

William, which he had introduced into his Harveian oration, in 1697.* It was Garth, too, who extemporized most of the verses which were inscribed on the toasting-glasses of their club, so that he may, *par excellence*, be considered the Kit-kat poet. He was the physician and friend of Marlborough, with whose sword he was knighted by George I., who made him his physician in ordinary. Garth was a very jovial man, and, some say, not a very religious one. Pope said he was as good a Christian as ever lived, 'without knowing it.' He certainly had no affectation of piety, and if charitable and good-natured acts could take a man to heaven, he deserved to go there. He had his doubts about faith, and is said to have died a Romanist. This he did in 1719, and the poor and the Kit-kat must both have felt his loss. He was perhaps more of a wit than a poet, although he has been classed at times with Gray and Prior; he can scarcely take the same rank as other verse-making doctors, such as Akenside, Darwin, and Armstrong. He seems to have been an active, healthy man—perhaps too much so for a poet—for it is on record that he ran a match in the Mall with the Duke of Grafton, and beat him. He was fond, too, of a hard frost, and had a regular speech to introduce on that subject: 'Yes, sir, 'fore Gad, very fine weather, sir—very wholesome weather, sir—kills trees, sir—very good for man, sir.'

Old Marlborough had another intimate friend at the club, who was probably one of its earliest members. This was Arthur Maynwaring a poet, too, in a way, but more celebrated at this time for his *liaison* with Mrs. Oldfield, the famous but disreputable actress, with whom he fell in love when he was forty years old, and whom he instructed in the niceties of elocution, making her rehearse her parts to him in private. Maynwaring was born in 1668, educated at Oxford, and destined for the bar, for which he studied. He began

* The Kit-kat club was not founded till 1703.

life as a vehement Jacobite, and even supported that party in sundry pieces; but like some others, he was easily converted, when, on coming to town, he found it more fashionable to be a Whig. He held two or three posts under the Government, whose cause he now espoused: had the honour of the dedication of 'The Tatler' to him by Steele, and died suddenly in 1712. He divided his fortune between his sister and his mistress, Mrs. Oldfield, and his son by the latter. Mrs. Oldfield must have grown rich in her sinful career, for she could afford, when ill, to refuse to take her salary from the theatre, though entitled to it. She acted best in Vanbrugh's 'Provoked Husband,' so well, in fact, that the manager gave her an extra fifty pounds by way of acknowledgment.

Poetising seems to have been as much a polite accomplishment of that age as letter-writing was of a later, and a smattering of science is of the present, day. Gentlemen tried to be poets, and poets gentlemen. The consequence was, that both made fools of themselves. Among the poetasters who belonged to the Kit-kat, we must mention Walsh, a country gentleman, member of Parliament, and very tolerable scholar. He dabbled in odes, elegies, epitaphs, and all that small fry of the muse which was then so plentiful. He wrote critical essays on Virgil, in which he tried to make out that the shepherds in the days of the Roman poet were very well-bred gentlemen of good education! He was a devoted admirer and friend of Dryden, and he encouraged Pope in his earlier career so kindly that the little viper actually praised him! Walsh died somewhere about 1709 in middle life.

We have not nearly done with the poets of the Kit-kat. A still smaller one than Walsh was Stepney, who, like Garth, had begun life as a violent Tory and turned coat when he found his interest lay the other way. He was well repaid, for from 1692 to 1706 he was sent on no less than eight diplomatic missions, chiefly to German courts. He owed this preferment to the good luck of having been a school-

fellow of Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax. He died about 1707, and had as grand a monument and epitaph in Westminster Abbey as if he had been a Milton or Dryden.

When you meet a dog trotting along the road, you naturally expect that his master is not far off. In the same way, where you find a poet, still more a poetaster, there you may feel certain you will light upon a patron. The Kit-kat was made up of Mæcenas's and their humble servants; and in the same club with Addison, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and the minor poets, we are not at all surprised to find Sir Robert Walpole, the Duke of Somerset, Halifax, and Somers.

Halifax was, *par excellence*, the Mæcenas of his day, and Pope described him admirably in the character of Bufo:—

> 'Proud as Apollo, on his forked hill,
> Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by every quill;
> *Fed with soft dedication* all day long,
> Horace and he went hand in hand in song.'

The dedications poured in thickly. Steele, Tickell, Philips, Smith, and a crowd of lesser lights, raised my lord each one on a higher pinnacle; and in return the powerful minister was not forgetful of the douceur which well-tuned verses were accustomed to receive. He himself had tried to be a poet, and in 1703 wrote verses for the toasting-cups of the Kit-kat. His lines to a Dowager Countess of ****; are good enough to make us surprised that he never wrote any better. Take a specimen:—

> 'Fair Queen of Fop-land in her royal style;
> Fop-land the greatest part of this great isle!
> Nature did ne'er so equally divide
> A female heart 'twixt piety and pride:
> Her waiting-maids prevent the peep of day,
> And all in order at her toilet lay
> Prayer-books, patch-boxes, sermon-notes, and paint,
> At once t' improve the sinner and the saint.'

A Mæcenas who paid for his dedications was sure to be well spoken of, and Halifax has been made out a wit and a poet, as well as a clever statesman. He reminds me of a young Oxford man whom I knew in my college-days, and who never walked down the street without half a dozen loafers touching their hats to him. It was affirmed that he distributed sundry crowns among them in consideration of this honour; and certainly, when he had left the university, I never spoke of him to any of that order of nondescripts who infest a university town without being assured that Mr. A—— was 'one of the right sort—a rale gen'l'man he was, and no mistake.' Halifax got his earldom and the garter from George I., and died, after enjoying them less than a year, in 1715.

Chancellor Somers, with whom Halifax was associated in the impeachment case in 1701, was a far better man in every respect. His was probably the purest character among those of all the members of the Kit-kat. He was the son of a Worcester attorney, and born in 1652. He was educated at Trinity, Oxford, and rose purely by merit, distinguishing himself at the bar and on the bench, unwearied in his application to business, and an exact and upright judge. At school he was a terribly good boy, keeping to his book in play-hours. Throughout life his habits were simple and regular, and his character unblemished. He slept but little, and in later years had a reader to attend him at waking. With such habits he can scarcely have been a constant attender at the club; and as he died a bachelor, it would be curious to learn what ladies he selected for his toasts. In his latter years his mind weakened, and he died in 1716 of apoplexy. Walpole calls him 'one of those divine men who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly.'

A huge stout figure rolls in now to join the toasters in Shire Lane. In the puffy, once handsome face, there are

signs of age, for its owner is past sixty; yet he is dressed in superb fashion; and in an hour or so, when the bottle has been diligently circulated, his wit will be brighter and keener than that of any young man present. I do not say it will be repeatable, for the talker belongs to a past age, even coarser than that of the Kit-kat. He is Charles Sackville,* famous as a companion of the merriest and most disreputable of the Stuarts, famous—or, rather, infamous—for his mistress, Nell Gwynn, famous for his verses, for his patronage of poets, and for his wild frolics in early life, when Lord Buckhurst. Rochester called him

> 'The best good man with the worst-natured muse;'

and Pope says he was

> 'The scourge of pride, though sanctified or great,
> Of fops in learning and of knaves in state;'

Our sailors still sing the ballad which he is said to have written on the eve of the naval engagement between the Duke of York and Admiral Opdam, which begins—

> 'To all you ladies now on land
> We men at sea indite.'

With a fine classical taste and a courageous spirit, he had in early days been guilty of as much iniquity as any of Charles's profligate court. He was one of a band of young libertines who robbed and murdered a poor tanner on the high-road, and were acquitted, less on account of the poor excuse they dished up for this act than of their rank and fashion. Such fine gentlemen could not be hanged for the sake of a mere workman in those days—no! no! Yet he does not seem to have repented of this transaction, for soon after he was engaged with Sedley and Ogle in a series of most indecent acts at the Cock Tavern in Bow-street, where

For some notice of Lord Dorset see p. 72.

Sedley, in 'birthday attire,' made a blasphemous oration from the balcony of the house. In later years he was the pride of the poets: Dryden and Prior, Wycherley, Hudibras, and Rymer, were all encouraged by him, and repaid him with praises. Pope and Dr. King were no less bountiful in their eulogies of this Mæcenas. His conversation was so much appreciated that gloomy William III. chose him as his companion, as merry Charles had done before. The famous Irish ballad, which my Uncle Toby was always humming, 'Lillibullero bullen-a-lah,' but which Percy attributes to the Marquis of Wharton, another member of the Kit-kat, was said to have been written by Buckhurst. He retained his wit to the last; and Congreve, who visited him when he was dying, said, 'Faith, he stutters more wit than other people have in their best health.' He died at Bath in 1706.

Buckhurst does not complete the list of conspicuous members of this club, but the remainder were less celebrated for their wit. There was the Duke of Kingston, the father of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Granville, who imitated Waller, and attempted to make his 'Myra' as celebrated as the court-poet's Saccharissa, who, by the way, was the mother of the Earl of Sunderland; the Duke of Devonshire, whom Walpole calls 'a patriot among the men, a gallant among the ladies,' and who founded Chatsworth; and other noblemen, chiefly belonging to the latter part of the seventeenth century, and all devoted to William III., though they had been bred at the courts of Charles and James.

With such an array of wits, poets, statesmen, and gallants, it can easily be believed that to be the toast of the Kit-kat was no slight honour; to be a member of it a still greater one; and to be one of its most distinguished, as Congreve was, the greatest. Let us now see what title this conceited beau and poet had to that position.

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

When 'Queen Sarah' of Marlborough read the silly epitaph which Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, had written and had engraved on the monument she set up to Congreve, she said, with one of the true Blenheim sneers, 'I know not what *happiness* she might have in his company, but I am sure it was no *honour*,' alluding to her daughter's eulogistic phrases.

Queen Sarah was right, as she often was when condemnation was called for; and however amusing a companion the dramatist may have been, he was not a man to respect, for he had not only the common vices of his age, but added to them a foppish vanity, toadyism, and fine-gentlemanism (to coin a most necessary word), which we scarcely expect to meet with in a man who sets up for a satirist.

It is the fate of greatness to have falsehoods told of it, and of nothing in connection with it more so than of its origin. If the converse be true, Congreve ought to have been a great man, for the place and time of his birth are both subjects of dispute. Oh! happy Gifford! or happy Croker! why did you not—perhaps you did—go to work to set the world right on this matter—you, to whom a date discovered is the

highest palm (no pun intended, I assure you) of glory, and who would rather Shakespere had never written 'Hamlet,' or Homer the 'Iliad,' than that some miserable little forgotten scrap which decided a year or a place should have been consigned to flames before it fell into your hands? Why did you not bring the thunder of your abuse and the pop-gunnery of your satire to bear upon the question, 'How, when, and where was William Congreve born?'

It was Lady Morgan, I think, who first 'saw the light' (that is, if she was born in the day-time) in the Irish Channel. If it had been only some one more celebrated, we should have had by this time a series of philosophical, geographical, and ethnological pamphlets to prove that she was English or Irish, according to the fancies or prejudices of the writers. It was certainly a very Irish thing to do, which is one argument for the Milesians, and again it was done in the Irish Channel, which is another and a stronger one; and altogether we are not inclined to go into forty-five pages of recondite facts and fine-drawn arguments, mingled with the most vehement abuse of anybody who ever before wrote on the subject, to prove that this country had the honour of producing her ladyship—the Wild Irish Girl. We freely give her up to the sister island. But not so William Congreve, though we are equally indifferent to the honour in his case.

The one party, then, assert that he was born in this country, the other that he breathed his first air in the Emerald Isle. Whichever be the true state of the case, we, as Englishmen, prefer to agree in the commonly received opinion that he came into this wicked world at the village of Bardsea or Bardsey, not far from Leeds in the county of York. Let the Bardseyans immediately erect a statue to his honour, if they have been remiss enough to neglect him heretofore.

But our difficulties are not ended, for there is a similar doubt about the year of his birth. His earliest biographer assures us he was born in 1672, and others that he was bap-

tized three years before, in 1669. Such a proceeding might well be taken as proof of his Hibernian extraction, and accordingly we find Malone supporting the earlier date, producing, of course, a certificate of baptism to support himself; and as we have a very great respect for his authority, we beg also to support Mr. Malone.

This being settled, we have to examine who were his parents; and this is satisfactorily answered by his earliest biographer, who informs us that he was of a very ancient family, being 'the only surviving son of William Congreve, Esq. (who was second son to Richard Congreve, Esq., of Congreve and Stretton in that county),' to wit, Yorkshire. Congreve *père* held a military command, which took him to Ireland soon after the dramatist's birth, and thus young William had the incomparable advantage of being educated at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Trinity, Dublin, the 'silent sister,' as it is commonly called at our universities.

At the age of nineteen, this youth sought the classic shades of the Middle Temple, of which he was entered a student, but by the honourable society of which he was never called to the bar; but whether this was from a disinclination to study 'Coke upon Lyttelton,' or from an incapacity to digest the requisite number of dinners, the devouring of which qualify a young gentleman to address an enlightened British jury, we have no authority for deciding. He was certainly not the first, nor the last, young Templar who has quitted special pleading on a crusade to the heights of Parnassus, and he began early to try the nib of his pen and the colour of his ink in a novel. Eheu! how many a novel has issued from the dull, dirty chambers of that same Temple! The waters of the Thames just there seem to have been augmented by a mingled flow of sewage and Helicon, though the former is undoubtedly in the greater proportion. This novel, called 'Incognita; or Love and Duty Reconciled,' seems to have been—for I confess that I have not read more than a chapter of it, and hope I never

may be forced to do so—great rubbish, with good store of villains and ruffians, love-sick maidens who tune their lutes—always conveniently at hand—and love-sick gallants who run their foes through the body with the greatest imaginable ease. It was, in fact, such a novel as James might have written, had he lived a century and a half ago. It brought its author but little fame, and accordingly he turned his attention to another branch of literature, and in 1693 produced 'The Old Bachelor,' a play of which Dryden, his friend, had so high an opinion that he called it the 'best first-play he had ever read.' However, before being put on the stage it was submitted to Dryden, and by him and others prepared for representation, so that it was well fathered. It was successful enough, and Congreve thus found his vocation. In his dedication—a regular piece of flummery of those days, for which authors were often well paid, either in cash or interest—he acknowledges a debt of gratitude to Lord Halifax, who appears to have taken the young man by the hand.

The young Templar could do nothing better now than write another play. Play-making was as fashionable an amusement in those days of Old Drury, the only patented theatre then, as novel-writing is in 1860; and when the young ensign, Vanbrugh, could write comedies and take the direction of a theatre, it was no derogation to the dignity of the Staffordshire squire's grandson to do as much. Accordingly, in the following year he brought out a better comedy, 'The Double Dealer,' with a prologue which was spoken by the famous Anne Bracegirdle. She must have been eighty years old when Horace Walpole wrote of her to that other Horace—Mann: 'Tell Mr. Chute that his friend Bracegirdle breakfasted with me this morning. As she went out and wanted her clogs, she turned to me and said: "I remember at the playhouse they used to call, Mrs. Oldfield's chair! Mrs. Barry's clogs! and Mrs. Bracegirdle's pattens!"' These three ladies were all buried in Westminster Abbey, and,

except Mrs. Cibber, the most beautiful and most sinful of them all—though they were none of them spotless—are the only actresses whose ashes and memories are hallowed by the place, for we can scarcely say that they do *it* much honour.

The success of 'The Double Dealer' was at first moderate, although that highly respectable woman, Queen Mary, honoured it with her august presence, which forthwith called up verses of the old adulatory style, though with less point and neatness than those addressed to the Virgin Queen:

'Wit is again the care of majesty,'

said the poet, and

'Thus flourished wit in our forefathers' age,
And thus the Roman and Athenian stage.
Whose wit is best, we'll not presume to tell,
But this we know, our audience will excell;
For never was in Rome, nor Athens seen
So fair a circle, and so bright a queen.'

But this was not enough, for when Her Majesty departed for another realm in the same year, Congreve put her into a highly eulogistic pastoral, under the name of Pastora, and made some compliments on her, which were considered the finest strokes of poetry and flattery combined, that an age of addresses and eulogies could produce.

'As lofty pines o'ertop the lowly steed,
So did her graceful height all nymphs exceed.
To which excelling height she bore a mind
Humble as osiers, bending to the wind.
* * * *
I mourn Pastora dead; let Albion mourn,
And sable clouds her chalkie cliffs adorn.'

This play was dedicated to Lord Halifax, of whom we have spoken, and who continued to be Congreve's patron.

The fame of the young man was now made; but in the

following year it was destined to shine out more brilliantly still. Old Betterton—one of the best Hamlets that ever trod the stage, and of whom Booth declared that when he was playing the Ghost to his Hamlet, his look of surprise and horror was so natural, that Booth could not for some minutes recover himself—was now a veteran in his sixtieth year. For forty years he had walked the boards and made a fortune for the patentees of Drury. It was very shabby of them, therefore, to give some of his best parts to younger actors. Betterton was disgusted, and determined to set up for himself, to which end he managed to procure another patent, turned the Queen's Court in Portugal Row, Lincoln's Inn, into a theatre, and opened it on the 30th of April, 1695. The building had been before used as a theatre in the days of the Merry Monarch, and Tom Killegrew had acted here some twenty years before; but it had again become a 'tennis-quatre of the lesser sort' says Cibber, and the new theatre was not very grand in fabric. But Betterton drew to it all the best actors and actresses of his former company; and Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle remained true to the old man. Congreve, to his honour, espoused the same cause, and the theatre opened with his play of 'Love for Love,' which was more successful than either of the former. The veteran himself spoke the prologue, and fair Bracegirdle the epilogue, in which the poet thus alluded to their change of stage:—

> 'And thus our audience, which did once resort
> To shining theatres to see our sport,
> Now find us tost into a tennis-court.
> Thus from the past, we hope for future grace;
> I beg it——
> And some here know I have *a begging face.*'

The king himself completed the success of the opening by attending it, and the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields might have ruined the older house, if it had not been for the rapidity with which Vanbrugh and Cibber, who wrote for Old

Drury, managed to concoct their pieces; while Congreve was a slower, though perhaps better, writer. 'Love for Love' was nereafter a favourite of Betterton's, and when in 1709, a year before his death, the company gave the old man—then in ill health, poor circumstances, and bad spirits—a benefit, he chose this play, and himself, though more than seventy, acted the part of Valentine, supported by Mrs. Bracegirdle as Angelina, and Mrs. Barry as Frail.

The young dramatist, with all his success, was not satisfied with his fame, and resolved to show the world that he had as much poetry as wit in him. This he failed to do; and, like better writers, injured his own fame, by not being contented with what he had. Congreve—the wit, the dandy, the man about town—took it into his head to write a tragedy. In 1697 'The Mourning Bride' was acted at the Tennis Court Theatre. The author was wise enough to return to his former muse, and some time after produced his best piece, so some think, 'The Way of the World,' which was also performed by Betterton's company; but, alas! for overwriting—that cacoethes of imprudent men—it was almost hissed off the stage. Whether this was owing to a weariness of Congreve's style, or whether at the time of its first appearance Collier's attacks, of which anon, had already disgusted the public with the obscenity and immorality of this writer, I do not know: but, whatever the cause, the consequence was that Mr. William Congreve, in a fit of pique, made up his mind never to write another piece for the stage—a wise resolution, perhaps—and to turn fine gentleman instead. With the exception of composing a masque called the 'Judgment of Paris,' and an opera, 'Gemele,' which was never performed, he kept this resolution very honestly; and so Mr. William Congreve's career as a playwright ends at the early age of thirty.

But though he abandoned the drama, he was not allowed to retire in peace. There was a certain worthy, but peppery little man, who, though a Jacobite and a clergyman, was

stanch and true, and as superior in character—even, indeed, in vigour of writing—to Congreve, as Somers was to every man of his age. This was Jeremy Collier, to whom we owe it that there is any English drama fit to be acted before our sisters and wives in the present day. Jeremy, the peppery, purged the stage in a succession of Jeremiads.

Born in 1650, educated at Cambridge as a poor scholar, ordained at the age of twenty-six, presented three years later with the living of Ampton, near Bury St. Edmunds, Jeremy had two qualities to recommend him to Englishmen—respectability and pluck. In an age when the clergy were as bad as the blackest sheep in their flocks, Jeremy was distinguished by purity of life; in an age when the only safety lay in adopting the principles of the Vicar of Bray, Jeremy was a Nonjuror, and of this nothing could cure him. The Revolution of 1688 was scarcely effected, when the fiery little partizan published a pamphlet, which was rewarded by a residence of some months in Newgate, *not* in the capacity of chaplain. But he was scarcely let out, when again went his furious pen, and for four years he continued to assail the new government, till his hands were shackled and his mouth closed in the prison of 'The Gate-house.' Now, see the character of the man. He was liberated upon giving bail, but had no sooner reflected on this liberation than he came to the conclusion that it was wrong, by offering security, to recognize the authority of magistrates appointed by a usurper, as he held William to be, and voluntarily surrendered himself to his judges. Of course he was again committed, but this time to the King's Bench, and would doubtless in a few years have made the tour of the London prisons, if his enemies had not got tired of trying him. Once more at liberty, he passed the next three years in retirement.

After 1693, Jeremy Collier's name was not brought before the public till 1696, when he publicly absolved Sir John Friend and Sir William Perkins, at their execution, for

being concerned in a plot to assassinate King William. His 'Essays on Moral Subjects' were published in 1697; 2nd vol., 1705; 3rd vol., 1709. But the only way to put out a firebrand like this is to let it alone, and Jeremy, being no longer persecuted, began, at last, to think the game was grown stupid, and gave it up. He was a well-meaning man, however, and as long as he had the luxury of a grievance, would injure no one.

He found one now in the immorality of his age, and if he had left politics to themselves from the first, he might have done much more good than he did. Against the vices of a court and courtly circles it was useless to start a crusade single-handed; but his quaint clever pen might yet dress out a powerful Jeremiad against those who encouraged the licentiousness of the people. Jeremy was no Puritan, for he was a Nonjuror and a Jacobite, and we may, therefore, believe that the cause was a good one, when we find him adopting precisely the same line as the Puritans had done before him. In 1698 he published, to the disgust of all Drury and Lincoln's Inn, his 'Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, together with the Sense of Antiquity upon this Argument.'

While the King of Naples is supplying his ancient Venuses with gowns, and putting his Marses and Herculeses into pantaloons, there are—such are the varieties of opinion—respectable men in this country who call Paul de Kock the greatest moral writer of his age, and who would yet like to see 'The Relapse,' 'Love for Love,' and the choice specimens of Wycherley, Farquhar, and even of Beaumont and Fletcher, acted at the Princess's and the Haymarket in the year of grace 1860. I am not writing 'A Short View' of this or any other moral subject; but this I must say—the effect of a sight or sound on a human being's silly little passions must of necessity be relative. You and I can read 'Don Juan,' Lewis's 'Monk,' the plays of Congreve, and any or all of the publica-

tions of Holywell Street, without more than disgust at their obscenity and admiration for their beauties. But could we be pardoned for putting these works into the hands of 'sweet seventeen,' or making Christmas presents of them to our boys? Ignorance of evil is, to a certain extent, virtue: let boys be boys in purity of mind as long as they can: let the unrefined 'great unwashed' be treated also much in the same way as young people. I maintain that to a coarse mind all improper ideas, however beautifully clothed, suggest only sensual thoughts—nay, the very modesty of the garments makes them the more insidious—the more dangerous. I would rather give my boy John, Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher, whose very improper things 'are called by their proper names,' than let him dive in the prurient innuendo of these later writers.

But there is no need to argue the question—the public has decided it long since, and except in indelicate ballets and occasional rather *French* passages in farce, our modern stage is free from immorality. Even in Garrick's days, when men were not much more refined than in those of Queen Anne, it was found impossible to put the old drama on the stage without considerable weeding. Indeed I doubt if even the liberal upholder of Paul de Kock would call Congreve a moral writer; but I confess I am not a competent judge, for, *risum teneatis*, my critics, I have not read his works since I was a boy, and what is more, I have no intention of reading them. I well remember getting into my hands a large thick volume, adorned with miserable woodcuts, and bearing on its back the title, 'Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar.' I devoured it at first with the same avidity with which one might welcome a bottle-imp, who at the hour of one's dulness turned up out of the carpet and offered you delights new and old for nothing but a tether on your soul; and with a like horror, boy though I was, I recoiled from it when any better moment

came. It seemed to me, when I read this book, as if life were too rotten for any belief, a nest of sharpers, adulterers, cut-throats, and prostitutes. There was none—as far as I remember—of that amiable weakness, of that better sentiment, which in Ben Jonson or Massinger reconcile us to human nature. If truth be a test of genius, it must be a proof of true poetry, that man is not made uglier than he is. Nay, his very ugliness loses its intensity and falls upon our diseased tastes, for want of some goodness, some purity and honesty to relieve it. I will not say that there is none of this in Congreve. I only know, that my recollection of his plays is like that of a vile nightmare, which I would not for anything have return to me. I have read, since, books as bad, perhaps worse in some respects, but I have found the redemption here and there. I would no more place Shandy in any boy's hands than Congreve and Farquhar; and yet I can read Tristram again and again with delight; for amid all that is bad there stand out Trim and Toby, pure specimens of the best side of human nature, coming home to us and telling us that the world is not all bad. There may be such touches in 'Love for Love,' or 'The Way of the World'—I know not and care not. To my remembrance Congreve is but a horrible nightmare, and may the fates forbid I should be forced to go through his plays again.

Perhaps, then, Jeremy was not far wrong, when he attacked these specimens of the drama with an unrelenting Nemesis; but he was not before his age. It was less the obvious coarseness of these productions with which he found fault than their demoralizing tendency in a direction which we should now, perhaps, consider innocuous. Certainly the Jeremiad overdid it, and like a swift, but not straight bowler at cricket, he sent balls which no wicket-keeper could stop, and which, therefore, were harmless to the batter. He did not want boldness. He attacked Dryden, now close upon his grave; Congreve, a young man, Vanbrugh, Cibber,

Farquhar, and the rest, all alive, all in the zenith of their fame, and all as popular as writers could be. It was as much as if a man should stand up to-day and denounce Dickens and Thackeray, with the exception that well-meaning people went along with Jeremy, whereas very few would do more than smile at the zeal of any one who tilted against our modern pets. Jeremy, no doubt, was bold, but he wanted tact, and so gave his enemy occasion to blaspheme. He made out cases where there were none, and let alone what we moderns should denounce. So Congreve took up the cudgels against him with much wit and much coarseness, and the two fought out the battle in many a pamphlet and many a letter. But Jeremy was not to be beat. His 'Short View' was followed by 'A Defence of the Short View,' a 'Second Defence of the Short View,' 'A Farther Short View,' and, in short, a number of 'Short Views,' which had been better merged into one 'Long Sight.' Jeremy grew coarse and bitter; Congreve coarser and bitterer; and the whole controversy made a pretty chapter for the 'Quarrels of Authors.' But the Jeremiad triumphed in the long run, because, if its method was bad, its cause was good, and a succeeding generation voted Congreve immoral. Enough of Jeremy. We owe him a tribute for his pluck, and though no one reads him in the present day, we may be thankful to him for having led the way to a better state of things.*

Congreve defended himself in eight letters addressed to Mr. Moyle, and we can only say of them, that, if anything, they are yet coarser than the plays he would excuse.

The works of the young Templar, and his connection with Betterton, introduced him to all the writers and wits of his day. He and Vanbrugh, though rivals, were fellow-workers, and our glorious Haymarket Theatre, which has gone on at times when Drury and Covent Garden have been in despair,

* Dryden, in the Preface to his Fables, acknowledged that Collier 'had, in many points, taxed him justly.'

owes its origin to their confederacy. But Vanbrugh's theatre was on the site of the present Opera House, and *the* Haymarket was set up as a rival concern. Vanbrugh's was built in 1705, and met the usual fate of theatres, being burnt down some eighty-four years after. It is curious enough that this house, destined for the 'legitimate drama'—often a very illegitimate performance—was opened by an opera set to *Italian* music, so that 'Her Majesty's' has not much departed from the original cast of the place.

Perhaps Congreve's best friend was Dryden. This man's life and death are pretty well known, and even his funeral has been described time and again. But Corinna—as she was styled—gave of the latter an account which has been called romantic, and much discredited. There is a deal of characteristic humour in her story of the funeral, and as it has long been lost sight of, it may not be unpalatable here: Dryden died on May-day, 1701, and Lord Halifax* undertook to give his body a *private* funeral in Westminster Abbey.

'On the Saturday following,' writes Corinna, 'the Company came. The Corps was put into a Velvet Hearse, and eighteen Mourning Coaches filled with Company attending. When, just before they began to move, Lord Jeffreys,† with some of his rakish Companions, coming by, in Wine, ask'd whose Funeral? And being told; "What!" cries he, "shall Dryden, the greatest Honour and Ornament of the Nation, be buried after this private Manner? No, Gentlemen! let all that lov'd Mr. Dryden, and honour his Memory, alight, and join with me in gaining my Lady's Consent, to let me have the Honour of his Interment, which shall be after another manner than this, and I will bestow 1000*l.* on a Monument in the Abbey for him." The Gentlemen in the Coaches, not knowing of the Bishop of Rochester's Favour, nor of Lord

* Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax. Lord Halifax was born in 1661, and died in 1715. He was called 'Mouse Montagu.'

† Son of Judge Jeffries: satirized by Pope under the name 'Bufo.'

Halifax's generous Design (these two noble Spirits having, out of Respect to the Family, enjoin'd Lady Elsabeth and her Son to keep their Favour concealed to the World, and let it pass for her own Expense), readily came out of the Coaches, and attended Lord Jeffreys up to the Lady's Bed-side, who was then sick. He repeated the Purport of what he had before said, but she absolutely refusing, he fell on his knees, vowing never to rise till his Request was granted. The rest of the Company, by his Desire, kneeled also; she being naturally of a timorous Disposition, and then under a sudden surprise, fainted away. As soon as she recover'd her Speech, she cry'd, "No, no!" "Enough gentlemen," reply'd he (rising briskly) "My Lady is very good, she says, Go, go!" She repeated her former Words with all her Strength, but alas in vain! her feeble Voice was lost in their Acclamations of Joy! and Lord Jeffreys order'd the Hearseman to carry the Corps to Russell's, an undertaker in Cheapside, and leave it there, till he sent orders for the Embalment, which, he added, should be after the Royal Manner. His Directions were obey'd, the Company dispersed, and Lady Elsabeth and Mr. Charles remained Inconsolable. Next Morning Mr. Charles waited on Lord Halifax, &c., to excuse his Mother and self, by relating the real Truth. But neither his Lordship nor the Bishop would admit of any Plea; especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, the ground open'd, the Choir attending, an Anthem ready set, and himself waiting for some Hours, without any Corps to bury. Russell, after three Days' Expectance of Orders for Embalment, without receiving any, waits on Lord Jeffreys, who, pretending Ignorance of the Matter, turn'd it off with an ill-natured Jest, saying, "Those who observed the orders of a drunken Frolick, deserved no better; that he remembered nothing at all of it, and he might do what he pleased with the Corps." On this Mr. Russell waits on Lady Elsabeth and Mr. Dryden; but alas, it was not in their power to answer.

The season was very hot, the Deceas'd had liv'd high and fast; and being corpulent, and abounding with gross Humours, grew very offensive. The Undertaker, in short, threaten'd to bring home the Corps, and set it before the Door. It cannot be easily imagin'd what grief, shame, and confusion seized this unhappy Family. They begged a Day's Respite, which was granted. Mr. Charles wrote a very handsome Letter to Lord Jeffreys, who returned it with this cool Answer, "He knew nothing of the Matter, and would be troubled no more about it." He then addressed the Lord Halifax and Bishop of Rochester, who were both too justly tho' unhappily incensed, to do anything in it. In this extream Distress, Dr. Garth, a man who entirely lov'd Mr. Dryden, and was withal a Man of Generosity and great Humanity, sends for the Corps to the College of Physicians in Warwick Lane, and proposed a Funeral by Subscription, to which himself set a most noble example. Mr. Wycherley, and several others, among whom must not be forgotten Henry Cromwell, Esq., Captain Gibbons, and Mr. Christopher Metcalfe, Mr. Dryden's Apothecary and intimate Friend (since a Collegiate Physician), who with many others contributed most largely to the Subscription; and at last a Day, about three Weeks after his Decease, was appointed for the Interment at the Abbey. Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin Oration over the Corps at the College; but the Audience being numerous, and the Room large, it was requisite the Orator should be elevated, that he might be heard. But as it unluckily happen'd there was nothing at hand but an old Beer-Barrel, which the Doctor with much good-nature mounted; and in the midst of his Oration, beating Time to the Accent with his Foot, the Head broke in, and his Feet sunk to the Bottom, which occasioned the malicious Report of his Enemies, "That he was turned a Tub-Preacher." However, he finished the Oration with a superior grace and genius, to the loud Acclamations of Mirth, which inspir'd the

mix'd or rather Mob-Auditors. The Procession began to move, a numerous Train of Coaches attended the Hearse: But, good God! in what Disorder can only be express'd by a Sixpenny Pamphlet, soon after publish'd, entitled "Dryden's Funeral." At last the Corps arrived at the Abbey, which was all unlighted. No Organ played, no Anthem sung; only two of the Singing boys preceded the Corps, who sung an Ode of Horace, with each a small candle in their Hand. The Butchers and other Mob broke in like a Deluge, so that only about eight or ten Gentlemen could gain Admission, and those forced to cut the Way with their drawn Swords. The Coffin in this Disorder was let down into Chaucer's Grave, with as much Confusion, and as little Ceremony, as was possible; every one glad to save themselves from the Gentlemen's Swords, or the Clubs of the Mob. When the Funeral was over, Mr. Charles sent a Challenge to Lord Jeffreys, who refusing to answer it, he sent several others, and went often himself, but could neither get a Letter deliver'd, nor Admittance to speak to him, that he resolved, since his Lordship refused to answer him like a gentleman, he would watch an Opportunity to meet him, and fight off hand, tho' with all the Rules of Honour; which his Lordship hearing, left the Town, and Mr. Charles could never have the satisfaction to meet him, tho' he sought it till his Death with the utmost Application.'

Dryden was, perhaps, the last man of learning that believed in astrology; though an eminent English author, now living, and celebrated for the variety of his acquirements, has been known to procure the casting of horoscopes, and to consult a noted 'astrologer,' who gives opinions for a small sum. The coincidences of prophecy are not more remarkable than those of star-telling; and Dryden and the author I have referred to were probably both captivated into belief by some fatuitous realization of their horoscopic predictions. Nor can we altogether blame their credulity, when we see biology,

table-turning, rapping, and all the family of imposture, taken up seriously in our own time.

On the birth of his son Charles, Dryden immediately cast his horoscope. The following account of Dryden's paternal solicitude for his son, and its result, may be taken as embellished, if not apocryphal. Evil hour, indeed—Jupiter, Venus, and the Sun were 'all under the earth;' Mars and Saturn were in square: eight, or a multiple of it, would be fatal to the child—the square foretold it. In his eighth, his twenty-third, or his thirty-second year, he was certain to die, though he might possibly linger on to the age of thirty-four. The stars did all they could to keep up their reputation. When the boy was eight years old he nearly lost his life by being buried under a heap of stones out of an old wall, knocked down by a stag and hounds in a hunt. But the stars were not to be beaten; and though the child recovered, went in for the game a second time in his twenty-third year, when he fell, in a fit of giddiness, from a tower, and, to use Lady Elsabeth's words, was 'mash'd to a mummy.' Still the battle was not over, and the mummy returned in due course to its human form, though considerably disfigured. Mars and Saturn were naturally disgusted at his recovery, and resolved to finish the disobedient youth. As we have seen, he in vain sought his fate at the hand of Jeffreys; but we must conclude that the offended constellations took Neptune in partnership, for in due course the youth met with a watery grave.

After abandoning the drama, Congreve appears to have come out in the light of an independent gentleman. He was already sufficiently introduced into literary society; Pope, Steele, Swift, and Addison were not only his friends but his admirers, and we can well believe that their admiration was considerable, when we find the one dedicating his 'Miscellany,' the other his translation of the 'Iliad,' to a man who was qualified neither by rank nor fortune to play Mæcenas.

At what time he was admitted to the Kit-kat I am not in a position to state, but it must have been after 1715, and by that time he was a middle-aged man, his fame was long since achieved; and whatever might be thought of his works and his controversy with Collier, he was recognized as one of the literary stars at a period when the great courted the clever, and wit was a passport to any society. Congreve had plenty of that, and probably at the Kit-kat was the life of the party when Vanbrugh was away or Addison in a graver mood. Untroubled by conscience, he could launch out on any subject whatever; and his early life, spent in that species of so-called gaiety which was then the routine of every young man of the world, gave him ample experience to draw upon. But Congreve's ambition was greater than his talents. No man so little knew his real value, or so grossly asserted one which he had not. Gay, handsome, and in good circumstances, he aspired to be, not Congreve the poet, not Congreve the wit, not Congreve the man of mind, but simply Congreve the fine gentleman. Such humility would be charming if it were not absurd. It is a vice of scribes to seek a character for which they have little claim. Johnson was as proud or prouder of his hunting than he was of his dictionary; Moore loved to be thought a diner-out rather than a poet; even Byron affected the fast man when he might have been content with the name of 'genius;' but Congreve went farther, and was ashamed of being poet, dramatist, genius, or what you will. An anecdote of him, told by Voltaire, who may have been an 'awfu' liar,' but had no temptation to invent in such a case as this, is so consistent with what we gather of the man's character, that one cannot but think it is true.

The philosopher of Ferney was anxious to see and converse with a brother dramatist of such celebrity as the author of 'The Way of the World.' He expected to find a man of a keen satirical mind, who would join him in a laugh against humanity. He visited Congreve, and naturally began to talk

of his works. The fine gentleman spoke of them as trifles utterly beneath his notice, and told him, with an affectation which perhaps was sincere, that he wished to be visited as a gentleman, not as an author. One can imagine the disgust of his brother dramatist. Voltaire replied, that had Mr. Congreve been nothing more than a gentleman, he should not have taken the trouble to call on him, and therewith retired with an expression of merited contempt.

It is only in the present day that authorship is looked upon as a profession, though it has long been one. It is amusing to listen to the sneers of men who never wrote a book, or who, having written, have gained thereby some more valuable advantage than the publisher's cheque. The men who talk with horror of writing for money, are glad enough if their works introduce them to the notice of the influential, and aid them in procuring a place. In the same way, Congreve was not at all ashamed of fulsome dedications, which brought him the favour of the great. Yet we may ask, if, the labourer being worthy of his hire, and the labour of the brain being the highest, finest, and most exhausting that can be, the man who straightforwardly and without affectation takes guineas from his publisher, is not honester than he who counts upon an indirect reward for his toil? Fortunately, the question is almost settled by the example of the first writers of the present day; but there are still people who think that one should sit down to a year's—ay ten years'—hard mental work, and expect no return but fame. Whether such objectors have always private means to return to, or whether they have never known what it is to write a book, we do not care to examine, but they are to be found in large numbers among the educated; and indeed, to this present day, it is held by the upper classes to be utterly derogatory to write for money.

Whether this was the feeling in Congreve's day or not is not now the question. Those were glorious days for an

author, who did not mind playing the sycophant a little. Instead of having to trudge from door to door in Paternoster Row, humbly requesting an interview, which is not always granted—instead of sending that heavy parcel of MS., which costs you a fortune for postage, to publisher after publisher, till it is so often 'returned with thanks' that you hate the very sight of it, the young author of those days had a much easier and more comfortable part to play. An introduction to an influential man in town, who again would introduce you to a patron, was all that was necessary. The profession of Mæcenas was then as recognized and established as that of doctor or lawyer. A man of money could always buy brains; and most noblemen considered an author to be as necessary a part of his establishment as the footmen who ushered them into my lord's presence. A fulsome dedication in the largest type was all that he asked; and if a writer were sufficiently profuse in his adulation, he might dine at Mæcenas's table, drink his sack and canary without stint, and apply to him for cash whenever he found his pockets empty. Nor was this all: if a writer were sufficiently successful in his works to reflect honour on his patron, he was eagerly courted by others of the noble profession. He was offered, if not hard cash, as good an equivalent, in the shape of a comfortable government sinecure; and if this was not to be had, he was sometimes even lodged and boarded by his obliged dedicatee. In this way he was introduced into the highest society; and if he had wit enough to support the character, he soon found himself *facile princeps* in a circle of the highest nobility in the land. Thus it is that in the clubs of the day we find title and wealth mingling with wit and genius; and the writer who had begun life by a cringing dedication, was now rewarded by the devotion and assiduity of the men he had once flattered. When Steele, Swift, Addison, Pope, and Congreve were the kings of their sets, it was time for authors to look and talk big. Eheu! those happy days are gone!

Our dramatist, therefore, soon discovered that a good play was the key to a good place, and the Whigs took care that he should have it. Oddly enough, when the Tories came in they did not turn him out. Perhaps they wanted to gain him over to themselves; perhaps, like the Vicar of Bray, he did not mind turning his coat once or twice in a life-time. However this may be, he managed to keep his appointment without offending his own party; and when the latter returned to power, he even induced them to give him a comfortable little sinecure, which went by the name of Secretary to the Island of Jamaica, and raised the income from his appointments to 1,200*l.* a year.

From this period he was little before the public. He could afford now to indulge his natural indolence and selfishness. His private life was perhaps not worse than that of the majority of his contemporaries. He had his intrigues, his mistresses, the same love of wine, and the same addiction to gluttony. He had the reputation of a wit, and with wits he passed his time, sufficiently easy in his circumstances to feel no damping to his spirits in the cares of this life. The Island of Jamaica probably gave him no further trouble than that of signing a few papers from time to time, and giving a receipt for his salary. His life, therefore, presents no very remarkable feature, and he is henceforth known more on account of his friends than for aught he may himself have done. The best of these friends was Walter Moyle, the scholar, who translated parts of Lucian and Xenophon, and was pretty well known as a classic. He was a Cornish man of independent means, and it was to him that Congreve addressed the letters in which he attempted to defend himself from the attacks of Collier.

It was not to be expected that a wit and a poet should go through life without a platonic, and accordingly we find our man not only attached, but devoted to a lady of great distinction. This was no other than Henrietta, Duchess of

Marlborough, the daughter of 'Malbrook' himself, and of the famous 'Queen Sarah.' Henrietta was the eldest daughter, and there was no son to inherit the prowess of Churchill and the parsimony of his wife. The nation—to which, by the way, the Marlboroughs were never grateful—would not allow the title of their pet warrior to become extinct, and a special Act of Parliament gave to the eldest daughter the honours of the duchy.* The two Duchesses of Marlborough hated each other cordially. Sarah's temper was probably the main cause of their bickering; but there is never a feud between parent and child in which both are not more or less blameable.

The Duchess Henrietta conceived a violent fancy for the wit and poet, and whatever her husband, Lord Godolphin, may have thought of it, the connection ripened into a most intimate friendship, so much so that Congreve made the duchess not only his executrix, but the sole residuary legatee of all his property.† His will gives us some insight into the toadying character of the man. Only four near relations are mentioned as legatees, and only 540*l.* is divided among them; whereas, after leaving 200*l.* to Mrs. Bracegirdle, the actress; 100*l.*, 'and all my apparel and linnen of all sorts' to a Mrs. Rooke, he divides the rest between his friends of the nobility, Lords Cobham and Shannon, the Duchess of Newcastle, Lady Mary Godolphin, Colonel Churchill (who receives 'twenty pounds, together with my gold-headed cane'), and, lastly, 'to the poor of the parish,' the magnificent sum of *ten pounds*. 'Blessed are those who give to the rich;' these words must surely have expressed the sentiment of the worldly Congreve.

However, Congreve got something in return from the Duchess Henrietta, which he might not have received from

* See Burke's 'Peerage.'

† The Duchess of Marlborough received 10,000*l.* by Mr. Congreve's will.

'the poor of the parish,' to wit, a monument, and an inscription on it written by her own hand. I have already said what 'Queen Sarah' thought of the latter, and, for the rest, those who care to read the nonsense on the walls of Westminster Abbey can decide for themselves as to the honour the poet received from his titled friend.

The latter days of William Congreve were passed in wit and gout: the wine, which warmed the one probably brought on the latter. After a course of ass's milk, which does not seem to have done him much good, the ex-dramatist retired to Bath, a very fashionable place for departing life in, under easy and elegant circumstances. But he not only drank of the springs beloved of King Bladud, of apocryphal memory, but even went so far as to imbibe the snail-water, which was then the last species of quack cure in vogue. This, probably, despatched him. But it is only just to that disagreeable little reptile that infests our gardens, and whose slime was supposed to possess peculiarly strengthening properties, to state that his death was materially hastened by being overturned when driving in his chariot. He was close upon sixty, had long been blind from cataracts in his eyes, and as he was no longer either useful or ornamental to the world in general, he could perhaps be spared. He died soon after this accident in January, 1729. He had the sense to die at a time when Westminster Abbey, being regarded as a mausoleum, was open to receive the corpse of any one who had a little distinguished himself, and even of some who had no distinction whatever. He was buried there with great pomp, and his dear duchess set up his monument. So much for his body. What became of the soul of a dissolute, vain, witty, and unprincipled man, is no concern of ours. *Requiescat in pace*, if there is any peace for those who are buried in Westminster Abbey.

BEAU NASH.

BEAU NASH.

'THERE is nothing new under the sun,' said Walpole, by way of a very original remark. 'No,' whispered George Selwyn, 'nor under the grandson either.'

Mankind, as a body, has proved its silliness in a thousand ways, but in none, perhaps, so ludicrously as in its respect for a man's coat. He is not always a fool that knows the value of dress; and some of the wisest and greatest of men have been dandies of the first water. King Solomon was one and Alexander the Great was another; but there never was a more despotic monarch, nor one more humbly obeyed by his subjects, than the King of Bath, and he won his dominions by the cut of his coat. But as Hercules was killed by a dress-shirt, so the beaux of the modern world have generally ruined themselves by their wardrobes, and brought remorse to their hearts, or contempt from the very people who once worshipped them. The husband of Mrs. Damer, who appeared in a new suit twice a-day, and whose wardrobe sold for 15,000*l.*, blew his brains out at a coffee-house. Beau Fielding, Beau Nash, and Beau Brummell all expiated their contemptible vanity in obscure old age of want and misery. As the world is full of folly, the history of a fool is as good a

mirror to hold up to it as another; but in the case of Beau Nash the only question is, whether he or his subjects were the greater fools. So now for a picture of as much folly as could well be crammed into that hot basin in the Somersetshire hills, of which more anon.

It is a hard thing for a man not to have had a father—harder still, like poor Savage, to have one whom he cannot get hold of; but perhaps it is hardest of all, when you have a father, and that parent a very respectable man, to be told that you never had one. This was Nash's case, and his father was so little known, and so seldom mentioned, that the splendid Beau was thought almost to have dropped from the clouds, ready dressed and powdered. He dropped in reality from anything but a heavenly place—the shipping town of Swansea: so that Wales can claim the honour of having produced the finest beau of his age.

Old Nash was, perhaps, a better gentleman than his son; but with far less pretension. He was a partner in a glass-manufactory. The Beau, in after-years, often got rallied on the inferiority of his origin, and the least obnoxious answer he ever made was to Sarah of Marlborough, as rude a creature as himself, who told him he was ashamed of his parentage. 'No, madam,' replied the King of Bath, 'I seldom mention my father, in company, not because I have any reason to be ashamed of him, but because he has some reason to be ashamed of me.' Nash, though a fop and a fool, was not a bad-hearted man, as we shall see. And if there were no other redeeming point in his character, it is a great deal to say for him, that in an age of toadyism, he treated rank in the same manner as he did the want of it, and did his best to remove the odious distinctions which pride would have kept up in his dominions. In fact, King Nash may be thanked for having, by his energy in this respect, introduced into society the first elements of that middle class which is found alone in England.

Old Nash—whose wife, by the way, was niece to that Colonel Poyer who defended Pembroke Castle in the days of the first Revolution—was one of those silly men who want to make gentlemen of their sons, rather than good men. He had his wish. His son Richard was a very fine gentleman, no doubt; but, unfortunately, the same circumstances that raised him to that much-coveted position, also made him a gambler and a profligate. Oh! foolish papas, when will you learn that a Christian snob is worth ten thousand irreligious gentlemen? When will you be content to bring up your boys for heaven rather than for the brilliant world? Nash, senior, sent his son first to school and then to Oxford, to be made a gentleman of. Richard was entered at Jesus College, the haunt of the Welsh. In my day, this quiet little place was celebrated for little more than the humble poverty of its members, one-third of whom rejoiced in the cognomen of Jones. They were not renowned for cleanliness, and it was a standing joke with us silly boys, to ask at the door for 'that Mr. Jones who had a tooth-brush.' If the college had the same character then, Nash must have astonished its dons, and we are not surprised that in his first year they thought it better to get rid of him.

His father could ill afford to keep him at Oxford, and fondly hoped he would distinguish himself. 'My boy Dick' did so at the very outset, by an offer of marriage to one of those charming sylphs of that academical city, who are always on the look-out for credulous undergraduates. The affair was discovered, and Master Richard, who was not seventeen, was removed from the University.* Whether he ever, in after-life, made another offer, I know not, but there is no doubt that he *ought* to have been married, and that the connections he formed in later years were far more disreputable than his first love affairs.

* Warner ('History of Bath,' p. 366), says, 'Nash was removed from Oxford by his friends.'

The worthy glass-manufacturer, having failed to make his son a gentleman in one way, took the best step to make him a blackguard, and, in spite of the wild inclinations he had already evinced, bought him a commission in the army. In this new position the incipient Beau did everything but his duty: dressed superbly, but would not be in time for parade; spent more money than he had, but did not obey orders; and finally, though not expelled from the army, he found it convenient to sell his commission, and return home, after spending the proceeds.

Papa was now disgusted, and sent the young Hopeless to shift for himself. What could a well-disposed, handsome youth do to keep body and, not soul, but clothes together? He had but one talent, and that was for dress. Alas, for our degenerate days! When we are pitched upon our own bottoms, we must work; and that is a highly ungentlemanly thing to do. But in the beginning of the last century, such a degrading resource was quite unnecessary. There were always at hand plenty of establishments where a youth could obtain the necessary funds to pay his tailor, if fortune favoured him; and if not, he could follow the fashion of the day, and take to what the Japanese call 'the happy Despatch.' Nash probably suspected that he had no brains to blow out, and he determined the more resolutely to make fortune his mistress. He went to the gaming-table, and turned his one guinea into ten, and his ten into a hundred, and was soon blazing about in gold lace, and a new sword, the very delight of dandies.

He had entered his name, by way of excuse, at the Temple, and we can quite believe that he ate all the requisite dinners, though it is not so certain that he paid for them. He soon found that a fine coat is not so very far beneath a good brain in worldly estimation, and when, on the accession of William the Third, the Templars, according to the old custom, gave his Majesty a banquet, Nash, as a

promising Beau, was selected to manage the establishment. It was his first experience of the duties of an M.C., and he conducted himself so ably on this occasion that the king even offered to make a knight of him. Probably Master Richard thought of his empty purse, for he replied with some of that assurance which afterwards stood him in such good stead, 'Please your majesty, if you intend to make me a knight, I wish I may be one of your poor knights of Windsor, and then I shall have a fortune, at least able to support my title.' William did not see the force of this argument, and Mr. Nash remained Mr. Nash till the day of his death. He had another chance of the title, however, in days when he could have better maintained it, but again he refused. Queen Anne once asked him why he declined knighthood. He replied: 'There is Sir William Read, the mountebank, who has just been knighted, and I should have to call him "brother."' The honour was, in fact, rather a cheap one in those days, and who knows whether a man who had done such signal service to his country did not look forward to a peerage? Worse men than even Beau Nash have had it.

Well, Nash could afford to defy royalty, for he was to be himself a monarch of all he surveyed, and a good deal more; but before we follow him to Bath, let us give the devil his due—which, by the way, he generally gets—and tell a pair of tales in the Beau's favour.

Imprimis, his accounts at the Temple were 10*l.* deficient. Now I don't mean that Nash was not as great a liar as most of his craft, but the truth of this tale rests on the authority of the 'Spectator,' though Nash took delight in repeating it.

'Come hither, young man,' said the Benchers, coolly: 'Whereunto this deficit?'

'Pri'thee, good masters,' quoth Nash, 'that 10*l.* was spent on making a man happy.'

'A man happy, young sir, pri'thee explain.'

'Odds donners,' quoth Nash, 'the fellow said in my hearing that his wife and bairns were starving, and 10*l.* would make him the happiest man *sub sole*, and on such an occasion as His Majesty's accession, could I refuse it him?'

Nash was, proverbially, more generous than just. He would not pay a debt if he could help it, but would give the very amount to the first friend that begged it. There was much ostentation in this, but then my friend Nash *was* ostentatious. One friend bothered him day and night for 20*l.* that was owing to him, and he could not get it. Knowing his debtor's character, he hit, at last, on a happy expedient, and sent a friend to *borrow* the money 'to relieve his urgent necessities.' Out came the bank-note, before the story of distress was finished. The friend carried it to the creditor, and when the latter again met Nash, he ought to have made him a pretty compliment on his honesty.

Perhaps the King of Bath would not have tolerated in any one else the juvenile frolics he delighted in after-years to relate of his own early days. When at a loss for cash, he would do anything, but work, for a fifty pound note, and having, in one of his trips, lost all his money at York, the Beau undertook to 'do penance' at the minster door for that sum. He accordingly arrayed himself—not in sackcloth and ashes—but in an able-bodied blanket, and nothing else, and took his stand at the porch, just at the hour when the dean would be going in to read service. 'He, ho,' cried that dignitary, who knew him, 'Mr. Nash in masquerade?'—'Only a Yorkshire penance, Mr. Dean,' quoth the reprobate; 'for keeping bad company, too,' pointing therewith to the friends who had come to see the sport.

This might be tolerated, but when in the eighteenth century a young man emulates the hardiness of Godiva, without her merciful heart, we may not think quite so well of him. Mr. Richard Nash, Beau Extraordinary to the Kingdom of Bath, once rode through a village in that costume

of which even our first parent was rather ashamed, and that too on the back of a cow! The wager was, I believe, considerable. A young Englishman did something more respectable, yet quite as extraordinary, at Paris, not a hundred years ago, for a small bet. He was one of the stoutest, thickest-built men possible, yet being but eighteen, had neither whisker nor moustache to masculate his clear English complexion. At the Maison Dorêe one night he offered to ride in the Champs Elysées in a lady's habit, and not be mistaken for a man. A friend undertook to dress him, and went all over Paris to hire a habit that would fit his round figure. It was hopeless for a time, but at last a good-sized body was found, and added thereto, an ample skirt. Félix dressed his hair with *mainte* plats and a *net*. He looked perfect, but in coming out of the hairdresser's to get into his fly, unconsciously pulled up his skirt and displayed a sturdy pair of well-trousered legs. A crowd—there is always a ready crowd in Paris—was waiting, and the laugh was general. This hero reached the horse-dealer's—'mounted,' and rode down the Champs. 'A very fine woman that,' said a Frenchman in the promenade, 'but what a back she has!' It was in the return bet to this that a now well-known diplomat drove a goat-chaise and six down the same fashionable resort, with a monkey, dressed as a footman, in the back seat. The days of folly did not, apparently, end with Beau Nash.

There is a long lacune in the history of this worthy's life, which may have been filled up by a residence in a spunging-house, or by a temporary appointment as billiard-marker; but the heroic Beau accounted for his disappearance at this time in a much more romantic manner. He used to relate that he was once asked to dinner on board a man-of-war under orders for the Mediterranean, and that such was the affection the officers entertained for him, that, having made him drunk—no difficult matter—they weighed anchor, set

sail, and carried the successor of King Bladud away to the wars. Having gone so far, Nash was not the man to neglect an opportunity for imaginary valour. He therefore continued to relate that, in the apocryphal vessel, he was once engaged in a yet more apocryphal encounter, and wounded in the leg. This was a little too much for the good Bathonians to believe, but Nash silenced their doubts. On one occasion, a lady who was present when he was telling this story, expressed her incredulity.

'I protest, madam,' cried the Beau, lifting his leg up, 'it is true, and if I cannot be believed, your ladyship may, if you please, receive further information and feel the ball in my leg.'

Wherever Nash may have passed the intervening years, may be an interesting speculation for a German professor, but is of little moment to us. We find him again, at the age of thirty, taking first steps towards the complete subjugation of the kingdom he afterwards ruled.

There is, among the hills of Somersetshire, a huge basin formed by the river Avon, and conveniently supplied with a natural gush of hot water, which can be turned on at any time for the cleansing of diseased bodies. This hollow presents many curious anomalies: though sought for centuries for the sake of health, it is one of the most unhealthily-situated places in the kingdom; here the body and the pocket are alike cleaned out, but the spot itself has been noted for its dirtiness since the days of King Bladud's wise pigs; here, again, the diseased flesh used to be healed, but the healthy soul within it speedily besickened; you came to cure gout and rheumatism, and caught in exchange dice-fever.

The mention of those pigs reminds me that it would be a shameful omission to speak of this city without giving the story of that apocryphal British monarch, King Bladud. But let me be the one exception; let me respect the good sense of the reader, and not insult him by supposing him

capable of believing a mythic jumble of kings and pigs and dirty marshes, which he will, if he cares to, find at full length in any 'Bath Guide'—price sixpence.

But whatever be the case with respect to the Celtic sovereign, there is, I presume, no doubt, that the Romans were here, and probably the centurions and tribunes cast the *alea* in some pristine assembly-room, or wagged their plumes in some well-built Pump-room, with as much spirit of fashion as the full-bottomed-wigged exquisites in the reign of King Nash. At any rate Bath has been in almost every age a common centre for health-seekers and gamesters—two antipodal races who always flock together—and if it has from time to time declined, it has only been for a period. Saxon churls and Norman lords were too sturdy to catch much rheumatic gout; crusaders had better things to think of than their imaginary ailments; good-health was in fashion under Plantagenets and Tudors; doctors were not believed in; even empirics had to praise their wares with much wit, and Morrison himself must have mounted a bank and dressed in Astleyian costume in order to find a customer; sack and small-beer were harmless, when homes were not comfortable enough to keep earl or churl by the fire-side, and 'out-of-doors' was the proper drawing-room for a man: in short, sickness came in with civilization, indisposition with immoral habits, fevers with fine-gentlemanliness, gout with greediness, and valetudinarianism—there *is* no Anglo-Saxon word for that—with what we falsely call refinement. So, whatever Bath may have been to pampered Romans, who over-ate themselves, it had little importance to the stout, healthy middle ages, and it was not till the reign of Charles II. that it began to look up. Doctors and touters—the two were often one in those days—thronged there, and fools were found in plenty to follow them. At last the blessed countenance of portly Anne smiled on the pig styes of King Bladud. In 1703 she went

to Bath, and from that time 'people of distinction' flocked there. The assemblage was not perhaps very brilliant or very refined. The visitors danced on the green, and played privately at hazard. A few sharpers found their way down from London; and at last the Duke of Beaufort instituted an M.C. in the person of Captain Webster—Nash's predecessor—whose main act of glory was in setting up gambling as a public amusement. It remained for Nash to make the place what it afterwards was, when Chesterfield could lounge in the Pump-room and take snuff with the Beau; when Sarah of Marlborough, Lord and Lady Hervey, the Duke of Wharton, Congreve, and all the little-great of the day thronged thither rather to kill time with less ceremony than in London, than to cure complaints more or less imaginary.

The doctors were only less numerous than the sharpers; the place was still uncivilized; the company smoked and lounged without etiquette, and played without honour: the place itself lacked all comfort, all elegance, and all cleanliness.

Upon this delightful place, the avatár of the God of Etiquette, personified in Mr. Richard Nash, descended somewhere about the year 1705, for the purpose of regenerating the barbarians. He alighted just at the moment that one of the doctors we have alluded to, in a fit of disgust at some slight on the part of the town, was threatening to destroy its reputation, or, as he politely expressed it, 'to throw a toad into the spring.' The Bathonians were alarmed and in consternation, when young Nash, who must have already distinguished himself as a macaroni, stepped forward and offered to render the angry physician impotent. 'We'll charm his toad out again with music,' quoth he. He evidently thought very little of the watering-place, after his town experiences, and prepared to treat it accordingly. He got up a band in the Pump-room, brought thither in this manner the healthy as well as the sick, and soon raised the renown of Bath as a resort for gaiety as well as for mineral

waters. In a word, he displayed a surprising talent for setting everything and everybody to rights, and was, therefore, soon elected, by tacit voting, the King of Bath.

He rapidly proved his qualifications for the position. First he secured his Orphean harmony by collecting a band-subscription, which gave two guineas a-piece to six performers; then he engaged an official pumper for the Pump-room; and lastly, finding that the bathers still gathered under a booth to drink their tea and talk their scandal, he induced one Harrison to build assembly-rooms, guaranteeing him three guineas a week to be raised by subscription.

All this demanded a vast amount of impudence on Mr. Nash's part, and this he possessed to a liberal extent. The subscriptions flowed in regularly, and Nash felt his power increase with his responsibility. So, then, our minor monarch resolved to be despotic, and in a short time laid down laws for the guests, which they obeyed most obsequiously. Nash had not much wit, though a great deal of assurance, but these laws were his *chef-d'œuvre*. Witness some of them:—

1. 'That a visit of ceremony at first coming and another at going away, are all that are expected or desired by ladies of quality and fashion—except impertinents.

4. 'That no person takes it ill that any one goes to another's play or breakfast, and not theirs—except captious nature.

5. 'That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen.—N.B. Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

6. 'That gentlemen crowding before the ladies at the ball, show ill manners; and that none do so for the future—except such as respect nobody but themselves.

9. 'That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them. N.B.—This does not extend to the *Have-at-alls*.

10. 'That all whisperers of lies and scandal be taken for their authors.

Really this law of Nash's must have been repealed some time or other at Bath. Still more that which follows :—

11. 'That repeaters of such lies and scandal be shunned by all company, except such as have been guilty of the same crime.'

There is a certain amount of satire in these Lycurgus statutes that shows Nash in the light of an observer of society; but, query, whether any frequenter of Bath would not have devised as good?

The dances of those days must have been somewhat tedious. They began with a series of minuets, in which, of course, only one couple danced at a time, the most distinguished opening the ball. These solemn performances lasted about two hours, and we can easily imagine that the rest of the company were delighted when the country dances, which included everybody, began. The ball opened at six; the country dances began at eight: at nine there was a lull for the gentlemen to offer their partners tea; in due course the dances were resumed, and at eleven Nash held up his hand to the musicians, and under no circumstances was the ball allowed to continue after that hour. Nash well knew the value of early hours to invalids, and he would not destroy the healing reputation of Bath for the sake of a little more pleasure. On one occasion the Princess Amelia implored him to allow one dance more. The despot replied, that his laws were those of Lycurgus, and could not be abrogated for any one. By this we see that the M.C. was already an autocrat in his kingdom.

Nor is it to be supposed that his majesty's laws were confined to such merely professional arrangements. Not a bit of it; in a very short time his impudence gave him undenied right of interference with the coats and gowns, the habits and manners, even the daily actions of his subjects, for so the visitors at Bath were compelled to become. *Si parvis compo-*

nere magna recibit, we may admit that the rise of Nash and that of Napoleon were owing to similar causes. The French emperor found France in a state of disorder, with which sensible people were growing more and more disgusted; he offered to restore order and propriety; the French hailed him, and gladly submitted to his early decrees; then, when he had got them into the habit of obedience, he could make what laws he liked, and use his power without fear of opposition. The Bath emperor followed the same course, and it may be asked whether it does not demand as great an amount of courage, assurance, perseverance, and administrative power to subdue several hundreds of English ladies and gentlemen as to rise supreme above some millions of French republicans. Yet Nash experienced less opposition than Napoleon; Nash reigned longer, and had no infernal machine prepared to blow him up.

Everybody was delighted with the improvements in the Pump-room, the balls, the promenades, the chairmen—the *Rouge* ruffians of the mimic kingdom—whom he reduced to submission, and therefore nobody complained when Emperor Nash went further, and made war upon the white aprons of the ladies and the boots of the gentlemen. The society was in fact in a very barbarous condition at the time, and people who came for pleasure liked to be at ease. Thus ladies lounged into the balls in their riding-hoods or morning dresses, gentlemen in boots, with their pipes in their mouths. Such atrocities were intolerable to the late frequenter of London society, and in his imperious arrogance, the new monarch used actually to pull off the white aprons of ladies who entered the assembly-rooms with that *dégagé* article, and throw them upon the back seats. Like the French emperor, again, he treated high and low in the same manner, and when the Duchess of Queensberry appeared in an apron, coolly pulled it off, and told her it was only fit for a maid-servant. Her grace made no resistance.

The men were not so submissive; but the M.C. turned them into ridicule, and whenever a gentleman appeared at the assembly-rooms in boots, would walk up to him, and in a loud voice remark, 'Sir, I think you have forgot your horse.' To complete his triumph, he put the offenders into a song called 'Trentinella's Invitation to the Assembly.'

'Come one and all,
To Hoyden Hall,
For there's the assembly this night;
None but prude fools,
Mind manners and rules;
We Hoydens do decency slight.

'Come trollops and slatterns,
Cockt hats and white aprons;
This best our modesty suits:
For why should not we
In a dress be as free
As Hogs-Norton squires in boots?'

and as this was not enough, got up a puppet-show of a sufficient coarseness to suit the taste of the time, in which the practice of wearing boots was satirized.

His next onslaught was upon that of carrying swords; and in this respect Nash became a public benefactor, for in those days, though Chesterfield was the writer on etiquette, people were not well-bred enough to keep their tempers, and rivals for a lady's hand at a minuet, or gamblers who disputed over their cards, invariably settled the matter by an option between suicide or murder under the polite name of duel. The M.C. wisely saw that these affairs would bring Bath into bad repute, and determined to supplant the rapier by the less dangerous cane. In this he was for a long time opposed, until a notorious torch-light duel between two gamblers, of whom one was run through the body, and the other, to show his contrition, turned Quaker, brought his opponents to a sense

of the danger of a weapon always at hand; and henceforth the sword was abolished.

These points gained, the autocrat laid down rules for the employment of the visitors' time, and these, from setting the fashion to some, soon became a law to all. The first thing to be done was, sensibly enough, the *ostensible* object of their residence in Bath, the use of the baths. At an early hour four lusty chairmen waited on every lady to carry her, wrapped in flannels, in

'A little black box, just the size of a coffin,'

to one of the five baths. Here, on entering, an attendant placed beside her a floating tray, on which were set her handkerchief, bouquet, and *snuff-box*, for our great-great-grandmothers *did* take snuff; and here she found her friends in the same bath of naturally hot water. It was, of course, a réunion for society on the plea of health; but the early hours and exercise secured the latter, whatever the baths may have done. A walk in the Pump-room, to the music of a tolerable band, was the next measure; and there, of course, the gentlemen mingled with the ladies. A coffee-house was ready to receive those of either sex; for that was a time when madame and miss lived a great deal in public, and English people were not ashamed of eating their breakfast in public company. These breakfasts were often enlivened by concerts paid for by the rich and enjoyed by all.

Supposing the peacocks now to be dressed out and to have their tails spread to the best advantage, we next find some in the public promenades, others in the reading-rooms, the ladies having their clubs as well as the men; others riding; others, perchance, already gambling. Mankind and womankind then dined at a reasonable hour, and the evening's amusements began early. Nash insisted on this, knowing the value of health to those, and they were many at that time, who sought Bath on its account. The balls began at six, and took place

every Tuesday and Friday, private balls filling up the vacant nights. About the commencement of his reign, a theatre was built, and whatever it may have been, it afterwards became celebrated as the nursery of the London stage, and now, *O tempo passato!* is almost abandoned. It is needless to add, that the gaming-tables were thronged in the evenings.

It was at them that Nash made the money which sufficed to keep up his state, which was vulgarly regal. He drove about in a chariot, flaming with heraldry, and drawn by six grays, with outriders, running footmen, and all the appendages which made an impression on the vulgar minds of the visitors of his kingdom. His dress was magnificent; his gold lace unlimited, his coats ever new; his hat alone was always of the same colour—*white;* and as the Emperor Alexander was distinguished by his purple tunic and Brummell by his bow, Emperor Nash was known all England over by his white hat.

It is due to the King of Bath to say that, however much he gained, he always played fair. He even patronized young players, and after fleecing them, kindly advised them to play no more. When he found a man fixed upon ruining himself, he did his best to keep him from that suicidal act. This was the case with a young Oxonian, to whom he had lost money, and whom he invited to supper, in order to give him his parental advice. The fool would not take the Beau's counsel and 'came to grief.' Even noblemen sought his 'protection.' The Duke of Beaufort entered on a compact with him to save his purse, if not his soul. He agreed to pay Nash ten thousand guineas, whenever he lost the same amount at a sitting. It was a comfortable treaty for our Beau, who accordingly watched his grace. Yet it must be said, to Nash's honour, that he once saved him from losing eleven thousand, when he had already lost eight, by reminding him of his compact. Such was play in those days! It is said that the Duke had afterwards to pay the fine, from losing the stipulated sum at Newmarket.

He displayed as much honesty with the young Lord Townshend, who lost to him his whole fortune, his estate, and even his carriage and horses—what madmen are gamblers!—and actually cancelled the whole debt, on condition my lord should pay him 5,000*l.* whenever he chose to claim it. To Nash's honour it must be said that he never came down upon the nobleman during his life. He claimed the sum from his executors, who paid it.—'Honourable to both parties.'

But an end was put to the gaming at Bath and everywhere else—*except in a royal palace*, and Nash swore that, as he was a king, Bath came under the head of the exceptions—by an Act of Parliament. Of course Nash and the sharpers who frequented Bath—and their name was Legion—found means to evade this law for a time, by the invention of new games. But this could not last, and the Beau's fortune went with the death of the dice.

Still, however, the very prohibition increased the zest for play for a time, and Nash soon discovered that a private table was more profitable than a public one. He entered into an arrangement with an old woman at Bath, in virtue of which he was to receive a fourth share of the profits. This was probably not the only 'hell'-keeping transaction of his life, and he had once before quashed an action against a cheat in consideration of a handsome bonus; and, in fact, there is no saying what amount of dirty work Nash would not have done for a hundred or so, especially when the game of the table was shut up to him. The man was immensely fond of money; he liked to show his gold-laced coat and superb new waistcoat in the Grove, the Abbey Ground, and Bond Street, and to be known as Le Grand Nash. But on the other hand, he did not love money for itself, and never hoarded it. It is, indeed, something to Nash's honour, that he died poor. He delighted, in the poverty of his mind, to display his great thick-set person to the most advantage; he was as vain as any fop, without the affectation of that character, for he was

always blunt and free-spoken, but, as long as he had enough to satisfy his vanity, he cared nothing for mere wealth. He had generosity, though he neglected the precept about the right hand and the left, and showed some ostentation in his charities. When a poor ruined fellow at his elbow saw him win at a throw 200*l.*, and murmured 'How happy that would make me!' Nash tossed the money to him, and said, 'Go and be happy then.' Probably the witless beau did not see the delicate satire implied in his speech. It was only the triumph of a gamester. On other occasions he collected subscriptions for poor curates and so forth, in the same spirit, and did his best towards founding an hospital, which has since proved of great value to those afflicted with rheumatic gout. In the same spirit, though himself a gamester, he often attempted to win young and inexperienced boys, who came to toss away their money at the rooms, from seeking their own ruin; and, on the whole, there was some goodness of heart in this gold-laced bear.

That he was a bear there are anecdotes enough to show, and whether true or not, they sufficiently prove what the reputation of the man must have been. Thus, when a lady, afflicted with a curvature of the spine, told him that 'She had come *straight* from London that day,' Nash replied with utter heartlessness, 'Then, ma'am, you've been damnably warpt on the road.' The lady had her revenge, however, for meeting the beau one day in the Grove, as she toddled along with her dog, and being impudently asked by him, if she knew the name of Tobit's dog, she answered quickly, 'Yes, sir, his name was Nash, and a most impudent dog he was too.'

It is due to Nash to state that he made many attempts to put an end to the perpetual system of scandal, which from some hidden cause seems always to be connected with mineral springs; but as he did not banish the old maids, of course he failed. Of the young ladies and their reputation he took a kind of paternal care, and in that day they seem

to have needed it, for even at nineteen, those who had any money to lose, staked it at the tables with as much gusto as the wrinkled, puckered, greedy-eyed 'single woman,' of a certain or uncertain age. Nash protected and cautioned them, and even gave them the advantage of his own unlimited experience. Witness, for instance, the care he took of 'Miss Sylvia,' a lovely heiress who brought her face and her fortune to enslave some and enrich others of the loungers of Bath. She had a terrible love of hazard, and very little prudence, so that Nash's good offices were much needed in the case. The young lady soon became the standing toast at all the clubs and suppers, and lovers of her, or her ducats, crowded round her; but though at that time she might have made a brilliant match, she chose, as young women will do, to fix her affections upon one of the worst men in Bath, who, naturally enough, did not return them. When this individual, as a climax to his misadventures, was clapt into prison, the devoted young creature gave the greater part of her fortune in order to pay off his debts, and falling into disrepute from this act of generosity, which was, of course, interpreted after a worldly fashion, she seems to have lost her honour with her fame, and the fair Sylvia took a position which could not be creditable to her. At last the poor girl, weary of slights, and overcome with shame, took her silk sash and hanged herself. The terrible event made a nine hours' —*not* nine days'—sensation in Bath, which was too busy with mains and aces to care about the fate of one who had long sunk out of its circles.

When Nash reached the zenith of his power, the adulation he received was somewhat of a parody on the flattery of courtiers. True, he had his bards from Grub Street who sang his praises, and he had letters to show from Sarah of Marlborough and others of that calibre, but his chief worshippers were cooks, musicians, and even imprisoned highwaymen—one of whom disclosed the secrets of the craft to him

—who wrote him dedications, letters, poems and what not. The good city of Bath set up his statue, and did Newton and Pope* the great honour of playing 'supporters' to him, which elicited from Chesterfield some well-known lines:—

> 'This statue placed the busts between
> Adds to the satire strength;
> Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
> But Folly at full length.'

Meanwhile his private character was none of the best. He had in early life had one attachment, besides that unfortunate affair for which his friends had removed him from Oxford, and in that had behaved with great magnanimity. The young lady had honestly told him that he had a rival; the Beau sent for him, settled on her a fortune equal to that her father intended for her, and himself presented her to the favoured suitor. Now, however, he seems to have given up all thoughts of matrimony, and gave himself up to mistresses, who cared more for his gold than for himself. It was an awkward conclusion to Nash's generous act in that one case, that before a year had passed, the bride ran away with her husband's footman; yet, though it disgusted him with ladies, it does not seem to have cured him of his attachment to the sex in general.

In the height of his glory Nash was never ashamed of receiving adulation. He was as fond of flattery as Le Grand Monarque—and he paid for it too—whether it came from a prince or a chair-man. Every day brought him some fresh meed of praise in prose or verse, and Nash was always delighted.

But his sun was to set in time. His fortune went when gaming was put down, for he had no other means of subsistence. Yet he lived on: he had not the good sense to die; and he reached the patriarchal of eighty-seven. In his old

* A full-length statue of Nash was placed between busts of Newton and Pope.

age he was not only garrulous, but bragging: he told stories of his exploits in which he, Mr. Richard Nash, came out as the first swordsman, swimmer, leaper, and what not. But by this time people began to doubt Mr. Richard Nash's long-bow, and the yarns he spun were listened to with impatience. He grew rude and testy in his old age; suspected Quin, the actor, who was living at Bath, of an intention to supplant him; made coarse, impertinent repartees to the visitors at that city, and in general raised up a dislike to himself. Yet, as other monarchs have had their eulogists in sober mind, Nash had his in one of the most depraved; and Anstey, the low-minded author of 'The New Bath Guide,' panegyrized him a short time after his death in the following verses:—

'Yet here no confusion—no tumult is known;
Fair order and beauty establish their throne;
For order, and beauty, and just regulation,
Support all the works of this ample creation.
For this, in compassion to mortals below,
The gods, their peculiar favour to show,
Sent Hermes to Bath in the shape of a beau:
That grandson of Atlas came down from above
To bless all the regions of pleasure and love;
To lead the fair nymph thro' the various maze,
Bright beauty to marshal, his glory and praise;
To govern, improve, and adorn the gay scene,
By the Graces instructed, and Cyprian queen:
As when in a garden delightful and gay,
Where Flora is wont all her charms to display,
The sweet hyacinthus with pleasure we view,
Contend with narcissus in delicate hue;
The gard'ner, industrious, trims out his border,
Puts each odoriferous plant in its order;
The myrtle he ranges, the rose and the lily,
With iris, and crocus, and daffa-down-dilly;
Sweet peas and sweet oranges all he disposes,
At once to regale both your eyes and your noses.
Long reign'd the great Nash, this omnipotent lord,
Respected by youth, and by parents ador'd;

For him not enough at a ball to preside,
The unwary and beautiful nymph would he guide;
Oft tell her a tale, how the credulous maid
By man, by perfidious man, is betrayed;
Taught Charity's hand to relieve the distrest,
While tears have his tender compassion exprest;
But alas! he is gone, and the city can tell
How in years and in glory lamented he fell.
Him mourn'd all the Dryads on Claverton's mount;
Him Avon deplor'd, him the nymph of the fount,
The crystalline streams.
Then perish his picture—his statue decay—
A tribute more lasting the Muses shall pay.
If true, what philosophers all will assure us,
Who dissent from the doctrine of great Epicurus,
That the spirit's immortal (as poets allow):
In reward of his labours, his virtue and pains,
He is footing it now in the Elysian plains,
Indulg'd, as a token of Proserpine's favour,
To preside at her balls in a cream-colour'd beaver.
Then peace to his ashes—our grief be supprest,
Since we find such a phœnix has sprung from his nest:
Kind heaven has sent us another professor,
Who follows the steps of his great predecessor.'

The end of the Bath Beau was somewhat less tragical than that of his London successor—Brummell. Nash, in his old age and poverty, hung about the clubs and supper-tables, button-holed youngsters, who thought him a bore, spun his long yarns, and tried to insist on obsolete fashions, when near the end of his life's century.

The clergy took more care of him than the youngsters. They heard that Nash was an octogenarian, and likely to die in his sins, and resolved to do their best to shrive him. Worthy and well-meaning men accordingly wrote him long letters, which, if he read, the Beau must have had more patience than we can lay claim to. There was, however, a great deal of hell-fire in these effusions, and there was nothing which Nash dreaded so much. As long as there was imme-

diate fear of death, he was pious and humble; the moment the fear had passed, he was jovial and indifferent again. His especial delight, to the last, seems to have been swearing against the doctors, whom he treated like the individual in Anstey's 'Bath Guide,' shying their medicines out of window upon their own heads. But the wary old Beckoner called him in, in due time, with his broken, empty-chested voice; and Nash was forced to obey. Death claimed him—and much good it got of him—in 1761, at the age of eighty-seven: there are few beaux who lived so long.

Thus ended a life, of which the moral lay, so to speak, out of it. The worthies of Bath were true to the worship of Folly, whom Anstey so well, though indelicately, describes as there conceiving Fashion; and though Nash, old, slovenly, disrespected, had long ceased to be either beau or monarch, treated his huge unlovely corpse with the honour due to the great—or little. His funeral was as glorious as that of any hero, and far more showy, though much less solemn, than the burial of Sir John Moore. Perhaps for a bit of prose flummery, by way of contrast to Wolfe's lines on the latter event, there is little to equal the account in a contemporary paper: —'Sorrow sate upon every face, and even children lisped that their sovereign was no more. The awfulness of the solemnity made the deepest impression on the minds of the distressed inhabitants. The peasant discontinued his toil, the ox rested from the plough, all nature seemed to sympathise with their loss, and the muffled bells rung a peal of bob-major.'

The Beau left little behind him, and that little not worth much, even including his renown. Most of the presents which fools or flatterers had made him, had long since been sent *chèz ma tante;* a few trinkets and pictures, and a few books, which probably he had never read, constituted his little store.*

* In the 'Annual Register,' (vol. v. p. 37,) it is stated that a pension of ten guineas a month was paid to Nash during the latter years of his life by the Corporation of Bath.

Bath and Tunbridge — for he had annexed that lesser kingdom to his own—had reason to mourn him, for he had almost made them what they were; but the country has not much cause to thank the upholder of gaming, the institutor of silly fashion, and the high-priest of folly. Yet Nash was free from many vices we should expect to find in such a man. He did not drink, for instance; one glass of wine, and a moderate quantity of small beer, being his allowance for dinner. He was early in his hours, and made others sensible in theirs. He was generous and charitable when he had the money; and when he had not he took care to make his subjects subscribe it. In a word, there have been worse men and greater fools; and we may again ask whether those who obeyed and flattered him were not more contemptible than Beau Nash himself.

So much for the powers of impudence and a fine coat!

PHILIP, DUKE OF WHARTON.

PHILIP, DUKE OF WHARTON.

If an illustration were wanted of that character unstable as water which shall not excel, this duke would at once supply it: if we had to warn genius against self-indulgence—some clever boy against extravagance—some poet against the bottle—this is the 'shocking example' we should select: if we wished to show how the most splendid talents, the greatest wealth, the most careful education, the most unusual advantages, may all prove useless to a man who is too vain or too frivolous to use them properly, it is enough to cite that nobleman, whose acts gained for him the name of the *infamous* Duke of Wharton. Never was character more mercurial, or life more unsettled than his; never, perhaps, were more changes crowded into a fewer number of years, more fame and infamy gathered into so short a space. Suffice it to say, that when Pope wanted a man to hold up to the scorn of the world, as a sample of wasted abilities, it was Wharton that he chose, and his lines rise in grandeur in proportion to the vileness of the theme:—

> 'Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
> Whose ruling passion was a love of praise.
> Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
> Women and fools must like him or he dies;

Though raptured senates hung on all he spoke,
The club must hail him master of the joke.
Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.
* * * *
Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
And wanting nothing but an honest heart;
Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,
And most contemptible, to shun contempt;
His passion still, to covet general praise,
His life to forfeit it a thousand ways;
A constant bounty which no friend has made;
An angel tongue which no man can persuade;
A fool with more of wit than all mankind;
Too rash for thought, for action too refined.

And then those memorable lines—

A tyrant to the wife his heart approved,
A rebel to the very king he loved;
He dies, sad outcast of each church and state;
And, harder still! flagitious, yet not great.'

Though it may be doubted if the 'lust of praise' was the cause of his eccentricities, so much as an utter restlessness and instability of character, Pope's description is sufficiently correct, and will prepare us for one of the most disappointing lives we could well have to read.

Philip, Duke of Wharton, was one of those men of whom an Irishman would say, that they were fortunate before they were born. His ancestors bequeathed him a name that stood high in England for bravery and excellence. The first of the house, Sir Thomas Wharton, had won his peerage from Henry VIII. for routing some 15,000 Scots with 500 men, and other gallant deeds. From his father the marquis he inherited much of his talents; but for the heroism of the former, he seems to have received it only in the extravagant form of foolhardiness. Walpole remembered, but could not tell where, a ballad he wrote on being arrested by the guard

in St. James's Park, for singing the Jacobite song, 'The King shall have his own again,' and quotes two lines to show that he was not ashamed of his own cowardice on the occasion:—

> 'The duke he drew out half his sword,
> —— the guard drew out the rest.'

At the siege of Gibraltar, where he took up arms against his own king and country, he is said to have gone alone one night to the very walls of the town, and challenged the outpost. They asked him who he was, and when he replied, openly enough, 'The Duke of Wharton,' they actually allowed him to return without either firing on or capturing him. The story seems somewhat apocryphal, but it is quite possible that the English soldiers may have refrained from violence to a well-known madcap nobleman of their own nation.

Philip, son of the Marquis of Wharton, at that time only a baron, was born in the last year but one of the seventeenth century, and came into the world endowed with every quality which might have made a great man, if he had only added wisdom to them. His father wished to make him a brilliant statesman, and, to have a better chance of doing so, kept him at home, and had him educated under his own eye. He seems to have easily and rapidly acquired a knowledge of classical languages; and his memory was so keen that when a boy of thirteen he could repeat the greater part of the 'Æneid' and of Horace by heart. His father's keen perception did not allow him to stop at classics; and he wisely prepared him for the career to which he was destined by the study of history, ancient and modern, and of English literature, and by teaching him, even at that early age, the art of thinking and writing on any given subject, by proposing themes for essays. There is certainly no surer mode of developing the reflective and reasoning powers of the mind; and the boy progressed with a rapidity which was almost alarming. Oratory, too, was of course cultivated, and to this end the

young nobleman was made to recite before a small audience passages from Shakspeare, and even speeches which had been delivered in the House of Lords, and we may be certain he showed no bashfulness in this display.

He was precocious beyond measure, and at sixteen was a man. His first act of folly—or, perhaps, *he* thought of manhood—came off at this early age. He fell in love with the daughter of a Major-General Holmes; and though there is nothing extraordinary in that, for nine-tenths of us have been love-mad at as early an age, he did what fortunately very few do in a first love affair, he married the adored one. Early marriages are often extolled, and justly enough, as safeguards against profligate habits, but this one seems to have had the contrary effect on young Philip. His wife was in every sense too good for him: he was madly in love with her at first, but soon shamefully and openly faithless. Pope's line—

'A tyrant to the wife his heart approved,'

requires explanation here. It is said that she did not present her boy-husband with a son for three years after their marriage, and on this child he set great value and great hopes. About that time he left his wife in the country, intending to amuse himself in town, and ordered her to remain behind with the child. The poor deserted woman well knew what was the real object of this journey, and could not endure the separation. In the hope of keeping her young husband out of harm, and none the less because she loved him very tenderly, she followed him soon after, taking the little Marquis of Malmsbury, as the young live branch was called, with her. The duke was, of course, disgusted, but his anger was turned into hatred, when the child, which he had hoped to make his heir and successor, caught in town the small-pox, and died in infancy. He was furious with his wife, refused to see her for a long time, and treated her with unrelenting coldness.

The early marriage was much to the distaste of Philip's father, who had been lately made a marquis, and who hoped to arrange a very grand 'alliance' for his petted son. He was, in fact, so much grieved by it, that he was fool enough to die of it in 1715, and the marchioness survived him only about a year, being no less disgusted with the licentiousness which she already discovered in her Young Hopeful.

She did what she could to set him right, and the young married man was shipped off with a tutor, a French Huguenot, who was to take him to Geneva to be educated as a Protestant and a Whig. The young scamp declined to be either. He was taken, by way of seeing the world, to the petty courts of Germany, and of course to that of Hanover, which had kindly sent us the worst family that ever disgraced the English throne, and by the various princes and grand-dukes received with all the honours due to a young British nobleman.

The tutor and his charge settled at last at Geneva, and my young lord amused himself with tormenting his strict guardian. Walpole tells us that he once roused him out of bed only to borrow a pin. There is no doubt that he led the worthy man a sad life of it; and to put a climax to his conduct, ran away from him at last, leaving with him, by way of hostage, a young bear-cub—probably quite as tame as himself—which he had picked up somewhere, and grown very fond of—birds of a feather, seemingly—with a message, which showed more wit than good-nature, to this effect:—'Being no longer able to bear with your ill-usage, I think proper to be gone from you; however, that you may not want company, I have left you the bear, as the most suitable companion in the world that could be picked out for you.'

The tutor had to console himself with a *tu quoque*, for the young scapegrace had found his way to Lyons in October, 1716, and then did the very thing his father's son should not

have done. The Chevalier de St. George, the Old Pretender, James III., or by whatever other *alias* you prefer to call him, having failed in the attempt 'to have his own again' in the preceding year, was then holding high court in high dudgeon at Avignon. Any adherent would, of course, be welcomed with open arms; and when the young marquis wrote to him to offer his allegiance, sending with his letter a fine entire horse as a peace offering, he was warmly responded to. A person of rank was at once despatched to bring the youth to the ex-regal court; he was welcomed with much enthusiasm, and the empty title of Duke of Northumberland at once, most kindly, conferred on him. However, the young marquis does not seem to have *goûté* the exile's court, for he stayed there one day only, and returning to Lyons, set off to enjoy himself at Paris. With much wit, no prudence, and a plentiful supply of money, which he threw about with the recklessness of a boy just escaped from his tutor, he could not fail to succeed in that capital; and, accordingly, the English received him with open arms. Even the ambassador, Lord Stair, though he had heard rumours of his wild doings, invited him repeatedly to dinner, and did his best, by advice and warning, to keep him out of harm's way. Young Philip had a horror of preceptors, paid or gratuitous, and treated the plenipotentiary with the same coolness as he had served the Huguenot tutor. When the former, praising the late marquis, expressed—by way of a slight hint—a hope 'that he would follow so illustrious an example of fidelity to his prince, and affection to his country, by treading in the same steps,' the young scamp replied, cleverly enough, 'That he thanked his excellency for his good advice, and as his excellency had also a worthy and deserving father, he hoped he would likewise copy so bright an example, and tread in all his steps;' the pertness of which was pertinent enough, for old Lord Stair had taken a disgraceful part against his sovereign in the massacre of Glencoe.

His frolics at Paris were of the most reckless character for a young nobleman. At the ambassador's own table he would occasionally send a servant to some one of the guests, to ask him to join in the Old Chevalier's health, though it was almost treason at that time to mention his name even. And again, when the windows at the embassy had been broken by a young English Jacobite, who was forthwith committed to Fort l'Evêque, the hare-brained marquis proposed, out of revenge, to break them a second time, and only abandoned the project because he could get no one to join him in it. Lord Stair, however, had too much sense to be offended at the follies of a boy of seventeen, even though that boy was the representative of a great English family; he, probably, thought it would be better to recall him to his allegiance by kindness and advice, than, by resenting his behaviour, to drive him irrevocably to the opposite party; but he was doubtless considerably relieved when, after leading a wild life in the capital of France, spending his money lavishly, and doing precisely everything which a young English nobleman ought not to do, my lord marquis took his departure in December, 1716.

The political education he had received now made the unstable youth ready and anxious to shine in the State; but being yet under age, he could not, of course, take his seat in the House of Lords. Perhaps he was conscious of his own wonderful abilities; perhaps, as Pope declares, he was thirsting for praise, and wished to display them; certainly he was itching to become an orator, and as he could not sit in an English Parliament, he remembered that he had a peerage in Ireland, as Earl of Rathfernhame and Marquis of Catherlogh, and off he set to see if the Milesians would stand upon somewhat less ceremony. He was not disappointed there. 'His brilliant parts,' we are told by contemporary writers, but rather, we should think, his reputation for wit and eccentricity, 'found favour in the eyes of Hiber-

nian quicksilvers, and in spite of his years, he was admitted to the Irish House of Lords.

When a friend had reproached him, before he left France, with infidelity to the principles so long espoused by his family, he is reported to have replied, characteristically enough, that 'he had pawned his principles to Gordon, the Chevalier's banker, for a considerable sum, and, till he could repay him, he must be a Jacobite; but when that was done, he would again return to the Whigs.' It is as likely as not that he borrowed from Gordon on the strength of the Chevalier's favour, for though a marquis in his own right, he was even at this period always in want of cash; and on the other hand, the speech, exhibiting the grossest want of any sense of honour, is in thorough keeping with his after-life. But whether he paid Gordon on his return to England—which is highly improbable—or whether he had not honour enough to keep his compact—which is extremely likely—there is no doubt that my lord marquis began, at this period, to qualify himself for the post of parish-weathercock to St. Stephens.

His early defection to a man who, whether rightful heir or not, had that of romance in his history which is even now sufficient to make our young ladies 'thorough Jacobites' at heart, was easily to be excused, on the plea of youth and high spirit. The same excuse does not explain his rapid return to Whiggery—in which there is no romance at all—the moment he took his seat in the Irish House of Lords. There is only one way to explain the zeal with which he now advocated the Orange cause: he must have been either a very designing knave, or a very unprincipled fool. As he gained nothing by the change but a dukedom for which he did not care, and as he cared for little else that the government could give him, we may acquit him of any very deep motives. On the other hand, his life and some of his letters show that, with a vast amount of bravado, he was sufficiently

a coward. When supplicated, he was always obstinate; when neglected, always supplicant. Now it required some courage in those days to be a Jacobite. Perhaps he cared for nothing but to astonish and disgust everybody with the facility with which he could turn his coat, as a hippodromist does with the ease with which he changes his costume. He was a boy and a peer, and he would make pretty play of his position. He had considerable talents, and now, as he sat in the Irish House, devoted them entirely to the support of the government.

For the next four years he was employed, on the one hand in political, on the other in profligate, life. He shone in both; and was no less admired, by the wits of those days, for his speeches, his arguments, and his zeal, than for the utter disregard of public decency he displayed in his vices. Such a promising youth, adhering to the government, merited some mark of its esteem, and accordingly, before attaining the age of twenty-one, he was raised to a dukedom. Being of age, he took his seat in the English House of Lords, and had not been long there before he again turned coat, and came out in the light of a Jacobite hero. It was now that he gathered most of his laurels.

The Hanoverian monarch had been on the English throne some six years. Had the Chevalier's attempt occurred at this period, it may be doubted if it would not have been successful. The 'Old Pretender' came too soon, the 'Young Pretender' too late. At the period of the first attempt, the public had had no time to contrast Stuarts and Guelphs: at that of the second, they had forgotten the one and grown accustomed to the other; but at the moment when our young duke appeared on the boards of the senate, the vices of the Hanoverians were beginning to draw down on them the contempt of the educated and the ridicule of the vulgar; and perhaps no moment could have been more favourable for advocating a restoration of the Stuarts. If Wharton had had as much energy and consistency as he had talent and

impudence, he might have done much towards that desirable, or undesirable, end.

The grand question at this time before the House was the trial of Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, demanded by Sir Robert Walpole. The man had a spirit almost as restless as his defender. The son of a man who might have been the original of the Vicar of Bray, he was very little of a poet, less of a priest, but a great deal of a politician. He was born in 1662, so that at this time he must have been nearly sixty years old. He had had by no means a hard life of it, for family interest, together with eminent talents, procured him one appointment after another, till he reached the bench, at the age of fifty-one, in the reign of Anne. He had already distinguished himself in several ways, most, perhaps, by controversies with Hoadly, and by sundry high-church motions. But after his elevation, he displayed his principles more boldly, refused to sign the Declaration of the Bishops, which was somewhat servilely made to assure George the First of the fidelity of the Established Church, suspended the curate of Gravesend for three years because he allowed the Dutch to have a service performed in his church, and even, it is said, on the death of Anne, offered to proclaim King James III., and head a procession himself in his lawn sleeves. The end of this and other vagaries was, that in 1722, the Government sent him to the Tower, on suspicion of being connected with a plot in favour of the Old Chevalier. The case excited no little attention, for it was long since a bishop had been charged with high treason; it was added that his gaolers used him rudely; and, in short, public sympathy rather went along with him for a time. In March, 1723, a bill was presented to the Commons, for 'inflicting certain pains and penalties on Francis, Lord Bishop of Rochester,' and it passed that House in April; but when carried up to the Lords, a defence was resolved on. The bill was read a third time on May 15th, and on that occasion the Duke of Wharton, then only twenty-four years old, rose and

delivered a speech in favour of the bishop. This oration far more resembled that of a lawyer summing up the evidence than of a parliamentary orator enlarging on the general issue. It was remarkable for the clearness of its argument, the wonderful memory of facts it displayed, and the ease and rapidity with which it annihilated the testimony of various witnesses examined before the House. It was mild and moderate, able and sufficient, but seems to have lacked all the enthusiasm we might expect from one who was afterwards so active a partisan of the Chevalier's cause. In short, striking as it was, it cannot be said to give the duke any claim to the title of a great orator; it would rather prove that he might have made a first-rate lawyer. It shows, however, that had he chosen to apply himself diligently to politics, he might have turned out a great leader of the Opposition.

Neither this speech nor the bishop's able defence saved him; and in the following month he was banished the kingdom, and passed the rest of his days in Paris.

Wharton, however, was not content with the House as an arena of political agitation. He was now old enough to have matured his principles thoroughly, and he completely espoused the cause of the exiled family. He amused himself with agitating throughout the country, influencing elections, and seeking popularity by becoming a member of the Wax-chandlers' Company. It is a proof of his great abilities, so shamefully thrown away, that he now, during the course of eight months, issued a paper, called 'The True Briton,' every Monday and Friday, written by himself, and containing varied and sensible arguments in support of his opinions, if not displaying any vast amount of original genius. This paper, on the model of 'The Tatler,' 'The Spectator,' &c., had a considerable sale, and attained no little celebrity, so that the Duke of Wharton acquired the reputation of a literary man as well as of a political leader.

But, whatever he might have been in either capacity, his

disgraceful life soon destroyed all hope of success in them. He was now an acknowledged wit about town, and, what was then almost a recognized concomitant of that character, an acknowledged profligate. He scattered his large fortune in the most reckless and foolish manner: though married, his moral conduct was as bad as that of any bachelor of the day; and such was his extravagance and open licentiousness, that, having wasted a princely revenue, he was soon caught in the meshes of Chancery, which very sensibly vested his fortune in the hands of trustees, and compelled him to be satisfied with an income of twelve hundred pounds a year.

The young rascal now showed hypocritical signs of penitence—he was always an adept in that line—and protested he would go abroad and live quietly, till his losses should be retrieved. There is little doubt that, under this laudable design, he concealed one of attaching himself closer to the Chevalier party, and even espousing the faith of that unfortunate prince, or pretender, whichever he may have been. He set off for Vienna, leaving his wife behind to die, in April 1726. He had long since quarrelled with her, and treated her with cruel neglect, and at her death he was not likely to be much afflicted. It is said, that, after that event, a ducal family offered him a daughter and large fortune in marriage, and that the Duke of Wharton declined the offer, because the latter was to be tied up, and he could not conveniently tie up the former. However this may be, he remained a widower for a short time: we may be sure, not long.

The hypocrisy of going abroad to retrench was not long undiscovered. The fascinating scapegrace seems to have delighted in playing on the credulity of others; and Walpole relates that, on the eve of the day on which he delivered his famous speech for Atterbury, he sought an interview with the minister, Sir Robert Walpole, expressed great contrition at having espoused the bishop's cause hitherto, and a deter-

mination to speak against him the following day. The minister was taken in, and at the duke's request, supplied him with all the main arguments, pro and con. The duper, having got these well into his brain—one of the most retentive—repaired to his London haunts, passed the night in drinking, and the next day produced all the arguments he had digested, *in the bishop's favour.*

At Vienna he was well received, and carried out his private mission successfully, but was too restless to stay in one place, and soon set off for Madrid. Tired now of politics, he took a turn at love. He was a poet after a fashion, for the pieces he has left are not very good: he was a fine gentleman, always spending more money than he had, and is said to have been handsome. His portraits do not give us this impression: the features are not very regular; and though not coarse, are certainly *not* refined. The mouth, somewhat sensual, is still much firmer than his character would lead us to expect; the nose sharp at the point, but cogitative at the nostrils; the eyes long but not large; while the raised brow has all that openness which he displayed in the indecency of his vices, but not in any honesty in his political career. In a word, the face is not attractive. Yet he is described as having had a brilliant complexion, a lively, varying expression, and a charm of person and manner that was quite irresistible. Whether on this account, or for his talents and wit, which were really shining, his new Juliet fell as deeply in love with him as he with her.

She was maid of honour—and a highly honourable maid—to the Queen of Spain. The Irish regiments long employed in the Spanish service had become more or less naturalized in that country, which accounts for the great number of thoroughly Milesian names still to be found there, some of them, as O'Donnell, owned by men of high distinction. Among other officers who had settled with their families in the Peninsula was a Colonel O'Byrne, who, like most of his

countrymen there, died penniless, leaving his widow with a pension and his daughter without a sixpence. It can well be imagined that an offer from an English duke was not to be sneezed at by either Mrs. or Miss O'Byrne; but there were some grave obstacles to the match. The duke was a Protestant. But what of that?—he had never been encumbered with religion, nor even with a decent observance of its institutions, for it is said that, when in England, at his country seat, he had, to show how little he cared for respectability, made a point of having the hounds out on a Sunday morning. He was not going to lose a pretty girl for the sake of a faith with which he had got disgusted ever since his Huguenot tutor tried to make him a sober Christian. He had turned coat in politics, and would now try his weathercock capabilities at religion. Nothing like variety, so Romanist he became.

But this was not all: his friends on the one hand objected to his marrying a penniless girl, and hers, on the other, warned her of his disreputable character. But when two people have made up their minds to be one, such trifles as these are of no consequence. A far more trying obstacle was the absolute refusal of her Most Catholic Majesty to allow her maid of honour to marry the duke.

It is a marvel that after the life of dissipation he had led, this man should have retained the power of loving at all. But everything about him was extravagant, and now that he entertained a virtuous attachment, he was as wild in it as he had been reckless in less respectable connections. He must have been sincere at the time, for the queen's refusal was followed by a fit of depression that brought on a low fever. The queen heard of it, and, touched by the force of his devotion, sent him a cheering message. The moment was not to be lost, and, in spite of his weak state, he hurried to court, threw himself at her Majesty's feet, and swore he must have his lady-love or die. Thus pressed, the queen was forced to consent, but warned him that he would repent

of it. The marriage took place, and the couple set off to Rome.

Here the Chevalier again received him with open arms, and took the opportunity of displaying his imaginary sovereignty by bestowing on him the Order of the Garter—a politeness the duke returned by wearing while there the no less unrecognised title of Duke of Northumberland, which 'His Majesty' had formerly conferred on him. But James III., though no saint, had more respect for decent conduct than his father and uncle; the duke ran off into every species of excess, got into debt as usual—

> 'When Wharton's just, and learns to pay his debts,
> And reputation dwells at Mother Brett's,
> * * * *
> Then, Celia, shall my constant passion cease,
> And my poor suff'ring heart shall be at peace,'

says a satirical poem of the day, called 'The Duke of Wharton's *Whens*'—was faithless to the wife he had lately been dying for; and, in short, such a thorough blackguard, that not even the Jacobites could tolerate him, and they turned him out of the Holy City till he should learn not to bring dishonour on the court of their fictitious sovereign.

The duke was not the man to be much ashamed of himself, though his poor wife may now have begun to think her late mistress in the right, and he was probably glad of an excuse for another change. At this time, 1727, the Spaniards were determined to wrest Gibraltar from its English defenders, and were sending thither a powerful army under the command of Los Torres. The duke had tried many trades with more or less success, and now thought that a little military glory would tack on well to his highly honourable biography. At any rate there was novelty in the din of war, and for novelty he would go anywhere. It mattered little that he should fight against his own king and own countrymen: he was not half blackguard enough yet, he may have thought; he had

played traitor for some time, he would now play rebel outright—the game *was* worth the candle.

So what does my lord duke do but write a letter (like the Chinese behind their mud-walls, he was always bold enough when well secured under the protection of the post, and was more absurd in ink even than in action) to the King of Spain, offering him his services as a volunteer against 'Gib.' Whether his Most Catholic Majesty thought him a traitor, a madman, or a devoted partisan of his own, does not appear, for without waiting for an answer—waiting was always too dull work for Wharton—he and his wife set off for the camp before Gibraltar, introduced themselves to the Conde in command, were received with all the honour—let us say honours—due to a duke, and established themselves comfortably in the ranks of the enemy of England. But all the duke's hopes of prowess were blighted. He had good opportunities. The Conde de los Torres made him his aide-de-camp, and sent him daily into the trenches to see how matters went on. When a defence of a certain Spanish outwork was resolved upon, the duke, from his rank, was chosen for the command. Yet in the trenches he got no worse wound than a slight one on the foot from a splinter of a shell, and this he afterwards made an excuse for not fighting a duel with swords; and as to the outwork, the English abandoned the attack, so that there was no glory to be found in the defence. He soon grew weary of such inglorious and rather dirty work as visiting trenches before a stronghold; and well he might; for if there be one thing duller than another and less satisfactory, it must be digging a hole out of which to kill your brother mortals; and thinking he should amuse himself better at the court, he set off for Madrid. Here the king, by way of reward for his brilliant services in doing nothing, made him *colonel-aggregate*—whatever that may be—of an Irish regiment; a very poor aggregate, we should think.

But my lord duke wanted something livelier than the command of a lot of Hispaniolized Milesians; and having found the military career somewhat uninteresting, wished to return to that of politics. He remembered with gusto the frolic life of the Holy City, and the political excitement in the Chevalier's court, and sent off a letter to 'His Majesty James III.,' expressing, like a rusticated Oxonian, his penitence for having been so naughty the last time, and offering to come and be very good again. It is to the praise of the Chevalier de St. George that he had worldly wisdom enough not to trust the gay penitent. He was tired, as everybody else was, of a man who could stick to nothing, and did not seem to care about seeing him again. Accordingly he replied in true kingly style, blaming him for having taken up arms against their common country, and telling him in polite language—as a policeman does a riotous drunkard—that he had better go home. The duke thought so too, was not at all offended at the letter, and set off, by way of returning towards his Penates, for Paris, where he arrived in May, 1728.

Horace Walpole—not *the* Horace—but 'Uncle Horace,' or 'old Horace,' as he was called, was then ambassador to the court of the Tuileries. Mr. Walpole was one of the Houghton 'lot,' a brother of the famous minister Sir Robert, and though less celebrated, almost as able in his time. He had distinguished himself in various diplomatic appointments, in Spain, at Hanover and the Hague, and having successfully tackled Cardinal Fleury, the successor of the Richelieus and Mazarins at Paris, he was now in high favour at home. In after years he was celebrated for his duel with Chetwynd, who, when 'Uncle Horace' had in the House expressed a hope that the question might be carried, had exclaimed, 'I hope to see you hanged first!' 'You hope to see me hanged first, do you?' cried Horace, with all the ferocity of the Walpoles; and thereupon, seizing him by the most prominent feature of his face, shook him violently. This was

matter enough for a brace of swords and coffee for four, and Mr. Chetwynd had to repent of his remark after being severely wounded. In those days our honourable House of Commons was as much an arena of wild beasts as the American senate of to-day.

To this minister our noble duke wrote a hypocritical letter, which, as it shows how the man *could* write penitently, is worth transcribing.

'Lions, June 28, 1728.

'Sir,—Your excellency will be surpris'd to receive a letter from me; but the clemency with which the government of England has treated me, which is in a great measure owing to your brother's regard to my father's memory, makes me hope that you will give me leave to express my gratitude for it.

'Since his present majesty's accession to the throne I have absolutely refused to be concerned with the Pretender or any of his affairs; and during my stay in Italy have behav'd myself in a manner that Dr. Peters, Mr. Godolphin, and Mr. Mills can declare to be consistent with my duty to the present king. I was forc'd to go to Italy to get out of Spain, where, if my true design had been known, I should have been treated a little severely.

'I am coming to Paris to put myself entirely under your excellency's protection; and hope that Sir Robert Walpole's good-nature will prompt him to save a family which his generosity induced him to spare. If your excellency would permit me to wait upon you for an hour, I am certain you would be convinc'd of the sincerity of my repentance for my former madness, would become an advocate with his majesty to grant me his most gracious pardon, which it is my comfort I shall never be required to purchase by any step unworthy of a man of honour. I do not intend, in case of the king's allowing me to pass the evening of my days under the shadow of his royal protection, to see England for some

years, but shall remain in France or Germany, as my friends shall advise, and enjoy country sports till all former stories are buried in oblivion. I beg of your excellency to let me receive your orders at Paris, which I will send to your hostel to receive. The Dutchess of Wharton, who is with me, desires leave to wait on Mrs. Walpole, if you think proper.

'I am, &c.'

After this, the ambassador could do no less than receive him; but he was somewhat disgusted when on leaving him the duke frankly told him—forgetting all about his penitent letter, probably, or too reckless to care for it—that he was going to dine with the Bishop of Rochester—Atterbury himself, then living in Paris—whose society was interdicted to any subject of King George. The duke, with his usual folly, touched on other subjects equally dangerous, his visit to Rome, and his conversion to Romanism; and, in short, disgusted the cautious Mr. Walpole. There is something delightfully impudent about all these acts of Wharton's; and had he only been a clown at Drury Lane instead of an English nobleman, he must have been successful. As it is, when one reads the petty hatred and humbug of those days, when liberty of speech was as unknown as any other liberty, one cannot but admire the impudence of his Grace of Wharton, and wish that most dukes, without being as profligate, would be as free-spoken.

With six hundred pounds in his pocket, our young Lothario now set up house at Rouen, with an establishment 'equal,' say the old-school writers, 'to his position, but not to his means.' In other words, he undertook to live in a style for which he could not pay. Twelve hundred a year may be enough for a duke, as for any other man, but not for one who considers a legion of servants a necessary appendage to his position. My lord duke, who was a good French scholar, soon found an ample number of friends and acquaint-

ances, and not being particular about either, managed to get through his half-year's income in a few weeks. Evil consequence: he was assailed by duns. French duns have never read their Bible, and know nothing about forgiving debtors; 'your money first, and then my pardon,' is their motto. My lord duke soon found this out. Still he had an income, and could pay them all off in time. So he drank and was merry, till one fine day came a disagreeable piece of news, which startled him considerably. The government at home had heard of his doings, and determined to arraign him for high treason.

He could expect little else, for had he not actually taken up arms against his sovereign?

Now Sir Robert Walpole was, no doubt, a bear. He was not a man to love or sympathise with; but he *was* good-natured at bottom. Our 'frolic grace' had reason to acknowledge this. He could not complain of harshness in any measures taken against him, and he had certainly no claim to consideration from the government he had treated so ill. Yet Sir Robert was willing to give him every chance; and so far did he go, that he sent over a couple of friends to him to induce him only to ask pardon of the king, with a promise that it would be granted. For sure the Duke of Wharton's character was anomalous. The same man who had more than once humiliated himself when unasked, who had written to Walpole's brother the letter we have read, would not now, when entreated to do so, write a few lines to that minister to ask mercy. Nay, when the gentlemen in question offered to be content even with a letter from the duke's valet, he refused to allow the man to write. Some people may admire what they will believe to be firmness, but when we review the duke's character and subsequent acts, we cannot attribute this refusal to anything but obstinate pride. The consequence of this folly was a stoppage of supplies, for as he was accused of high treason, his estate was of course sequestrated.

He revenged himself by writing a paper, which was published in 'Mist's Journal,' and which, under the cover of a Persian tale, contained a species of libel on the government.

His position was now far from enviable; and, assailed by duns, he had no resource but to humble himself, not before those he had offended, but before the Chevalier, to whom he wrote in his distress, and who sent him 2,000*l*., which he soon frittered away in follies. This gone, the duke begged and borrowed, for there are some people such fools that they would rather lose a thousand pounds to a peer than give sixpence to a pauper, and many a tale was told of the artful manner in which his grace managed to cozen his friends out of a louis or two. His ready wit generally saved him.

Thus on one occasion an Irish toady invited him to dinner; the duke talked of his wardrobe, then sadly defective; what suit should he wear? The Hibernian suggested black velvet. 'Could you recommend a tailor?' 'Certainly.' Snip came, an expensive suit was ordered, put on, and the dinner taken. In due course the tailor called for his money. The duke was not a bit at a loss, though he had but a few francs to his name. 'Honest man,' quoth he, 'you mistake the matter entirely. Carry the bill to Sir Peter; for know that whenever I consent to wear another man's livery, my master pays for the clothes,' and inasmuch as the dinner-giver was an Irishman, he did actually discharge the account.

At other times he would give a sumptuous entertainment, and in one way or another induce his guests to pay for it. He was only less adroit in coining excuses than Theodore Hook, and had he lived a century later, we might have a volume full of anecdotes to give of his ways and no means. Meanwhile his unfortunate duchess was living on the charity of friends, while her lord and master, when he could get anyone to pay for a band, was serenading young ladies. Yet he was jealous enough of his wife at times, and once sent a challenge to a Scotch nobleman, simply because some silly

friend asked him if he had forbidden his wife to dance with the lord. He went all the way to Flanders to meet his opponent; but, perhaps fortunately for the duke, Marshal Berwick arrested the Scotchman, and the duel never came off.

Whether he felt his end approaching, or whether he was sick of vile pleasures which he had recklessly pursued from the age of fifteen, he now, though only thirty years of age, retired for a time to a convent, and was looked on as a penitent and devotee. Penury, doubtless, cured him in a measure, and poverty, the porter of the gates of heaven, warned him to look forward beyond a life he had so shamefully misused. But it was only a temporary repentance; and when he left the religious house, he again rushed furiously into every kind of dissipation.

At length, utterly reduced to the last extremities, he bethought himself of his colonelcy in Spain, and determined to set out to join his regiment. The following letter from a friend who accompanied him will best show what circumstances he was in:—

'Paris, June 1, 1729.

'Dear Sir,—I am just returned from the Gates of Death, to return you Thanks for your last kind Letter of Accusations, which I am persuaded was intended as a seasonable Help to my Recollection, at a Time that it was necessary for me to send an Inquisitor General into my Conscience, to examine and settle all the Abuses that ever were committed in that little Court of Equity; but I assure you, your long Letter did not lay so much my Faults as my Misfortunes before me, which believe me, dear ——, have fallen as heavy and as thick upon me as the Shower of Hail upon us two in E—— Forest, and has left me much at a Loss which way to turn myself. The Pilot of the Ship I embarked in, who industriously ran upon every Rock, has at last split the Vessel, and so much of a sudden, that the whole Crew, I mean his Domesticks, are all left to swim for their Lives, without

one friendly Plank to assist them to Shore. In short, he left me sick, in Debt, and without a Penny; but as I begin to recover, and have a little Time to think, I can't help considering myself, as one whisk'd up behind a Witch upon a Broomstick, and hurried over Mountains and Dales through confus'd Woods and thorny Thickets, and when the Charm is ended, and the poor Wretch dropp'd in a Desart, he can give no other Account of his enchanted Travels, but that he is much fatigued in Body and Mind, his Cloaths torn, and worse in all other Circumstances, without being of the least Service to himself or any body else. But I will follow your Advice with an active Resolution, to retrieve my bad Fortune, and almost a Year miserably misspent.

'But notwithstanding what I have suffered, and what my Brother Mad-man has done to undo himself, and every body who was so unlucky to have the least Concern with him, I could not but be movingly touch'd at so extraordinary a Vicissitude of Fortune, to see a great Man fallen from that shining Light, in which I beheld him in the House of Lords, to such a Degree of Obscurity, that I have observ'd the meanest Commoner here decline, and the Few he would sometimes fasten on, to be tired of his Company; for you know he is but a bad Orator in his Cups, and of late he has been but seldom sober.

'A week before he left Paris, he was so reduced, that he had not one single Crown at Command, and was forc'd to thrust in with any Acquaintance for a Lodging: Walsh and I have had him by Turns, all to avoid a Crowd of Duns, which he had of all Sizes, from Fourteen hundred Livres to Four, who hunted him so close, that he was forced to retire to some of the neighbouring Villages for Safety. I, sick as I was, hurried about Paris to raise Money, and to St. Germain's to get him Linen; I bought him one Shirt and a Cravat, which with 500 Livres, his whole Stock, he and his Duchess, attended by one Servant, set out for Spain.

All the News I have heard of them since is that a Day or two after, he sent for Captain Brierly, and two or three of his Domesticks, to follow him; but none but the Captain obey'd the Summons. Where they are now, I can't tell; but fear they must be in great Distress by this Time, if he has no other Supplies; and so ends my Melancholy Story.

'I am, &c.'

Still his good humour did not desert him; he joked about their poverty on the road, and wrote an amusing account of their journey to a friend, winding up with the well-known lines:—

'Be kind to my remains, and oh! defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend.'

His mind was as vigorous as ever, in spite of the waste of many debauches; and when recommended to make a new translation of 'Telemachus,' he actually devoted one whole day to the work; the next he forgot all about it. In the same manner he began a play on the story of Mary Queen of Scots, and Lady M. W. Montagu wrote an epilogue for it, but the piece never got beyond a few scenes. His genius, perhaps, was not for either poetry or the drama. His mind was a keen, clear one, better suited to argument and to grapple tough polemic subjects. Had he but been a sober man, he might have been a fair, if not a great writer. The 'True Briton,' with many faults of licence, shows what his capabilities were. His absence of moral sense may be guessed from the fact that in a poem on the preaching of Atterbury, he actually compares the bishop to our Saviour himself!

At length he reached Bilboa and his regiment, and had to live on the meagre pay of eighteen pistoles a month. The Duke of Ormond, then an exile, took pity on his wife, and supported her for a time: she afterwards rejoined her mother at Madrid.

Meanwhile, the year 1730 brought about a salutary change in the duke's morals. His health was fast giving way from the effects of divers excesses; and there is nothing like bad health for purging a bad soul. The end of a misspent life was fast drawing near, and he could only keep it up by broth with eggs beaten up in it. He lost the use of his limbs, but not of his gaiety. In the mountains of Catalonia he met with a mineral spring which did him some good; so much, in fact, that he was able to rejoin his regiment for a time. A fresh attack sent him back to the waters; but on his way he was so violently attacked that he was forced to stop at a little village. Here he found himself without the means of going farther, and in the worst state of health. The monks of a Bernardine convent took pity on him and received him into their house. He grew worse and worse; and in a week died on the 31st of May, without a friend to pity or attend him, among strangers, and at the early age of thirty-two.

Thus ended the life of one of the cleverest fools that have ever disgraced our peerage.

LORD HERVEY.

LORD HERVEY.

THE village of Kensington was disturbed in its sweet repose one day, more than a century ago, by the rumbling of a ponderous coach and six, with four out-riders and two equerries kicking up the dust; whilst a small body of heavy dragoons rode solemnly after the huge vehicle. It waded, with inglorious struggles, through a deep mire of mud, between the Palace and Hyde Park, until the cortége entered Kensington Park, as the gardens were then called, and began to track the old road that led to the red-brick structure to which William III. had added a higher story, built by Wren. There are two roads by which coaches could approach the house: 'one,' as the famous John, Lord Hervey, wrote to his mother, 'so convex, the other so concave, that, by this extreme of faults, they agree in the common one of being, like the high-road, impassable.' The rumbling coach, with its plethoric steeds, toils slowly on, and reaches the dismal pile, of which no association is so precious as that of its having been the birth-place of our loved Victoria Regina. All around, as the emblazoned carriage impressively veers round into the grand entrance, savours of William and Mary, of Anne, of Bishop Burnet and Harley, Atterbury and

Bolingbroke. But those were pleasant days compared to those of the second George, whose return from Hanover in this mountain of a coach is now described.

The panting steeds are gracefully curbed by the state coachman in his scarlet livery, with his cocked-hat and gray wig underneath it: now the horses are foaming and reeking as if they had come from the world's end to Kensington, and yet they have only been to meet King George on his entrance into London, which he has reached from Helvoetsluys, on his way from Hanover, in time, as he expects, to spend his birthday among his English subjects.

It is Sunday, and repose renders the retirement of Kensington and its avenues and shades more sombre than ever. Suburban retirement is usually so. It is noon; and the inmates of Kensington Palace are just coming forth from the chapel in the palace. The coach is now stopping, and the equerries are at hand to offer their respectful assistance to the diminutive figure that, in full Field-marshal regimentals, a cocked-hat stuck crosswise on his head, a sword dangling even down to his heels, ungraciously heeds them not, but stepping down, as the great iron gates are thrown open to receive him, looks neither like a king nor a gentleman. A thin, worn face, in which weakness and passion are at once pictured; a form buttoned and padded up to the chin; high Hessian boots without a wrinkle; a sword and a swagger, no more constituting him the military character than the 'your majesty' from every lip can make a poor thing of clay a king. Such was George II.: brutal, even to his submissive wife. Stunted by nature, he was insignificant in form, as he was petty in character; not a trace of royalty could be found in that silly, tempestuous physiognomy, with its hereditary small head: not an atom of it in his made-up, paltry little presence; still less in his bearing, language, or qualities.

The queen and her court have come from chapel, to meet

A Scene before Kensington Palace—George II. and Queen Caroline.
Vol. I., p. 213.

the royal absentee at the great gate: the consort, who was to his gracious majesty like an elder sister rather than a wife, bends down, not to his knees, but yet she bends, to kiss the hand of her royal husband. She is a fair, fat woman, no longer young, scarcely comely; but with a charm of manners, a composure, and a *savoir faire* that causes one to regard her as mated, not matched to the little creature in that cocked-hat, which he does not take off even when she stands before him. The pair, nevertheless, embrace: it is a triennial ceremony performed when the king goes or returns from Hanover, but suffered to lapse at other times; but the condescension is too great: and Caroline ends, where she began: 'gluing her lips' to the ungracious hand held out to her in evident ill-humour.

They turn, and walk through the court, then up the grand staircase, into the queen's apartment. The king has been swearing all the way at England and the English, because he has been obliged to return from Hanover, where the German mode of life and new mistresses were more agreeable to him than the English customs and an old wife. He displays, therefore, even on this supposed happy occasion, one of the worst outbreaks of his insufferable temper, of which the queen is the first victim. All the company in the palace, both ladies and gentlemen, are ordered to enter: he talks to them all, but to the queen he says not a word.

She is attended by Mrs. Clayton, afterwards Lady Sundon, whose lively manners and great good temper and good will—lent out like leasehold to all, till she saw what their friendship might bring,—are always useful at these *tristes rencontres*. Mrs. Clayton is the amalgamating substance between chemical agents which have, of themselves, no cohesion; she covers with address what is awkward; she smooths down with something pleasant what is rude; she turns off—and her office in that respect is no sinecure at that court—what

is indecent, so as to keep the small majority of the company who have respectable notions in good humour. To the right of Queen Caroline stands another of her majesty's household, to whom the most deferential attention is paid by all present: nevertheless, she is the queen of the court, but not the queen of the royal master of that court. It is Lady Suffolk, the mistress of King George II., and long mistress of the robes to Queen Caroline. She is now past the bloom of youth, but her attractions are not in their wane; but endured until she had attained her seventy-ninth year. Of a middle height, well made, extremely fair, with very fine light hair, she attracts regard from her sweet, fresh face, which had in it a comeliness independent of regularity of feature. According to her invariable custom, she is dressed with simplicity; her silky tresses are drawn somewhat back from her snowy forehead, and fall in long tresses on her shoulders, not less transparently white. She wears a gown of rich silk, opening in front to display a chemisette of the most delicate cambric, which is scarcely less delicate than her skin. Her slender arms are without bracelets, and her taper fingers without rings. As she stands behind the queen, holding her majesty's fan and gloves, she is obliged, from her deafness, to lean her fair face with its sunny hair first to the right side, then to the left, with the helpless air of one exceedingly deaf—for she had been afflicted with that infirmity for some years: yet one cannot say whether her appealing looks, which seem to say, 'Enlighten me if you please,'—and the sort of softened manner in which she accepts civilities which she scarcely comprehends, do not enhance the wonderful charm which drew every one who knew her towards this frail, but passionless woman.

The queen forms the centre of the group. Caroline, daughter of the Marquis of Brandenburgh-Anspach, notwithstanding her residence in England of many years, notwithstanding her having been, at the era at which this biography

begins, ten years its queen—is still German in every attribute. She retains, in her fair and comely face, traces of having been handsome; but her skin is deeply scarred by the cruel small-pox. She is now at that time of life when Sir Robert Walpole even thought it expedient to reconcile her to no longer being an object of attraction to her royal consort. As a woman, she has ceased to be attractive to a man of the character of George II.; but, as a queen, she is still, as far as manners are concerned, incomparable. As she turns to address various members of the assembly, her style is full of sweetness as well as of courtesy; yet on other occasions she is majesty itself. The tones of her voice, with its still foreign accent, are most captivating; her eyes penetrate into every countenance on which they rest. Her figure, plump and matronly, has lost much of its contour; but is well suited for her part. Majesty in woman should be *embonpoint*. Her hands are beautifully white, and faultless in shape. The king always admired her bust; and it is, therefore, by royal command, tolerably exposed. Her fair hair is upraised in full short curls over her brow; her dress is rich, and distinguished in that respect from that of the Countess of Suffolk.—'Her good Howard'—as she was wont to call her when, before her elevation to the peerage, she was lady of the bed-chamber to Caroline, had, when in that capacity, been often subjected to servile offices, which the queen, though apologizing in the sweetest manner, delighted to make her perform. 'My good Howard' having one day placed a handkerchief on the back of her royal mistress, the king, who half worshipped his intellectual wife, pulled it off in a passion, saying, 'Because you have an ugly neck yourself, you hide the queen's!' All, however, that evening was smooth as ice, and perhaps as cold also. The company are quickly dismissed, and the king, who has scarcely spoken to the queen, retires to his closet, where he is attended by the subservient Caroline, and by two other persons.

Sir Robert Walpole, prime minister, has accompanied the king, in his carriage, from the very entrance of London, where the famous statesman met him. He is now the privileged companion of their majesties, in their seclusion for the rest of the evening. His cheerful face, in its full evening disguise of wig and tie, his invariable good humour, his frank manners, his wonderful sense, his views, more practical than elevated, sufficiently account for the influence which this celebrated minister obtained over Queen Caroline, and the readiness of King George to submit to the tie. But Sir Robert's great source of ascendency was his temper. Never was there in the annals of our country a minister so free of access: so obliging in giving, so unoffending when he refused; so indulgent and kind to those dependent on him; so generous, so faithful to his friends, so forgiving to his foes. This was his character under one phase: even his adherents sometimes blamed his easiness of temper; the impossibility in his nature to cherish the remembrance of a wrong, or even to be roused by an insult. But, whilst such were the amiable traits of his character, history has its lists of accusations against him for corruption of the most shameless description. The end of this veteran statesman's career is well known. The fraudulent contracts which he gave, the peculation and profusion of the secret service money, his undue influence at elections, brought around his later life a storm, from which he retreated into the Upper House, when created Earl of Orford. It was before this timely retirement from office that he burst forth in these words: 'I oppose nothing; give in to everything; am said to do everything, and to answer for everything; and yet, God knows, I dare not do what I think is right.'

With his public capacity, however, we have not here to do: it is in his character of a courtier that we view him following the queen and king. His round, complacent face, with his small glistening eyes, arched eyebrows, and with a

mouth ready to break out aloud into a laugh, are all subdued into a respectful gravity as he listens to King George grumbling at the necessity for his return home. No English cook could dress a dinner; no English cook could select a dessert; no English coachman could drive; nor English jockey ride; no Englishman—such were his habitual taunts—knew how to come into a room; no Englishwoman understood how to dress herself. The men, he said, talked of nothing but their dull politics, and the women of nothing but their ugly clothes. Whereas, in Hanover, all these things were at perfection: men were patterns of politeness and gallantry; women, of beauty, wit, and entertainment. His troops there were the bravest in the world; his manufacturers the most ingenious; his people, the happiest: in Hanover, in short, plenty reigned, riches flowed, arts flourished, magnificence abounded, everything was in abundance that could make a prince great, or a people blessed.

There was one standing behind the queen who listened to these outbreaks of the king's bilious temper, as he called it, with an apparently respectful solicitude, but with the deepest disgust in his heart. A slender, elegant figure, in a court suit, faultlessly and carefully perfect in that costume, stands behind the queen's chair. It is Lord Hervey. His lofty forehead, his features, which have a refinement of character, his well-turned mouth, and full and dimpled chin, form his claims to that beauty which won the heart of the lovely Mary Lepel; whilst the somewhat thoughtful and pensive expression of his physiognomy, when in repose, indicated the sympathising, yet, at the same time, satirical character of one who won the affections, perhaps unconsciously, of the amiable Princess Caroline, the favourite daughter of George II.

A general air of languor, ill concealed by the most studied artifice of countenance, and even of posture, characterizes Lord Hervey. He would have abhorred robustness; for he be-

longed to the clique then called Maccaronis; a set of fine gentlemen, of whom the present world would not be worthy, tricked out for show, fitted only to drive out fading majesty in a state coach; exquisite in every personal appe: lage, too fine for the common usages of society; *point-device*, not only in every curl and ruffle, but in every attitude and step; men with full satin roses on their shining shoes; diamond tablet rings on their forefingers; with snuff-boxes, the worth of which might almost purchase a farm; lace worked by the delicate fingers of some religious recluse of an ancestress, and taken from an altar-cloth; old point-lace, dark as coffee-water could make it; with embroidered waistcoats, wreathed in exquisite tambour-work round each capacious lappet and pocket; with cut steel buttons that glistened beneath the courtly wax-lights: with these and fifty other small but costly characteristics that established the reputation of an aspirant Maccaroni. Lord Hervey was, in truth, an effeminate creature: too dainty to walk; too precious to commit his frame to horseback; and prone to imitate the somewhat recluse habits which German rulers introduced within the court: he was disposed to candle-light pleasures and cockney diversions; to Marybone and the Mall, and shrinking from the athletic and social recreations which, like so much that was manly and English, were confined almost to the English squire *pur et simple* after the Hanoverian accession; when so much degeneracy for awhile obscured the English character, debased its tone, enervated its best races, vilified its literature, corrupted its morals, changed its costume, and degraded its architecture.

Beneath the effeminacy of the Maccaroni, Lord Hervey was one of the few who united to intense *finery* in every minute detail, an acute and cultivated intellect. To perfect a Maccaroni it was in truth advisable, if not essential, to unite some smattering of learning, a pretension to wit, to his superdandyism; to be the author of some personal squib, or the

translator of some classic. Queen Caroline was too cultivated herself to suffer fools about her, and Lord Hervey was a man after her own taste; as a courtier he was essentially a fine gentleman; and, more than that, he could be the most delightful companion, the most sensible adviser, and the most winning friend in the court. His ill-health, which he carefully concealed, his fastidiousness, his ultra-delicacy, of habits formed an agreeable contrast to the coarse robustness of 'Sir Robert,' and constituted a relief after the society of the vulgar, strong-minded minister, who was born for the hustings and the House of Commons rather than for the courtly drawing-room.

John Lord Hervey, long vice-chamberlain to Queen Caroline, was, like Sir Robert Walpole, descended from a commoner's family, one of those good old squires who lived, as Sir Henry Wotton says, 'without lustre and without obscurity.' The Duchess of Marlborough had procured the elevation of the Herveys of Ickworth to the peerage. She happened to be intimate with Sir Thomas Felton, the father of Mrs. Hervey, afterwards Lady Bristol, whose husband, at first created Lord Hervey, and afterwards Earl of Bristol, expressed his obligations by retaining as his motto, when raised to the peerage, the words 'Je n'oublieray jàmais,' in allusion to the service done him by the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.

The Herveys had always been an eccentric race; and the classification of 'men, women, and Herveys,' by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was not more witty than true. There was in the whole race an eccentricity which bordered on the ridiculous, but did not imply want of sense or of talent. Indeed this third species, 'the Herveys,' were more gifted than the generality of 'men and women.' The father of Lord Hervey had been a country gentleman of good fortune, living at Ickworth, near Bury in Suffolk, and representing the town in parliament, as his father had before him, until raised to the peerage. Before that elevation he had lived on in his

own county, uniting the character of the English squire, in that fox-hunting county, with that of a perfect gentleman, a scholar, and a most admirable member of society. He was a poet, also, affecting the style of Cowley, who wrote an elegy upon his uncle, William Hervey, an elegy compared to Milton's 'Lycidas' in imagery, music, and tenderness of thought. The shade of Cowley, whom Charles II. pronounced, at his death, to be 'the best man in England,' haunted this peer, the first Earl of Bristol. He aspired especially to the poet's *wit;* and the ambition to be a wit flew like wildfire among his family, especially infecting his two sons, Carr, the elder brother of the subject of this memoir, and Lord Hervey.

It would have been well could the Earl of Bristol have transmitted to his sons his other qualities. He was pious, moral, affectionate, sincere; a consistent Whig of the old school, and, as such, disapproving of Sir Robert Walpole, of the standing army, the corruptions, and that doctrine of expediency so unblushingly avowed by the ministers.

Created Earl of Bristol in 1714, the heir-apparent to his titles and estates was the elder brother, by a former marriage, of John, Lord Hervey; the dissolute, clever, whimsical Carr, Lord Hervey. Pope, in one of his satirical appeals to the *second* Lord Hervey, speaks of his friendship with Carr, 'whose early death deprived the family' (of Hervey) 'of as much wit and honour as he left behind him in any part of it.' The *wit* was a family attribute, but the *honour* was dubious: Carr was as deistical as any Maccaroni of the day, and, perhaps, more dissolute than most: in one respect he has left behind him a celebrity which may be as questionable as his wit, or his honour; he is reputed to be the father of Horace Walpole, and if we accept presumptive evidence of the fact, the statement is clearly borne out, for in his wit, his indifference to religion, to say the least, his satirical turn, his love of the world, and his contempt of all that was great and good, he

strongly resembles his reputed son; whilst the levity of Lady Walpole's character, and Sir Robert's laxity and dissoluteness, do not furnish any reasonable doubt to the statement made by Lady Louisa Stuart, in the introduction to Lord Wharncliffe's 'Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.' Carr, Lord Hervey, died early, and his half-brother succeeded him in his title and expectations.

John, Lord Hervey, was educated first at Westminster School, under Dr. Freind, the friend of Mrs. Montagu; thence he was removed to Clare Hall, Cambridge: he graduated as a nobleman, and became M.A. in 1715.

At Cambridge Lord Hervey might have acquired some manly prowess; but he had a mother who was as strange as the family into which she had married, and who was passionately devoted to her son: she evinced her affection by never letting him have a chance of being like other English boys. When his father was at Newmarket, Jack Hervey, as he was called, was to ride a race, to please his father; but his mother could not risk her dear boy's safety, and the race was won by a jockey. He was as precious and as fragile as porcelain: the elder brother's death made the heir of the Herveys more valuable, more effeminate, and more controlled than ever by his eccentric mother. A court was to be his hemisphere, and to that all his views, early in life, tended. He went to Hanover to pay his court to George I.: Carr had done the same, and had come back enchanted with George, the heir-presumptive, who made him one of the lords of the bedchamber. Jack Hervey also returned full of enthusiasm for the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II., and the Princess; and that visit influenced his destiny.

He now proposed making the grand tour, which comprised Paris, Germany, and Italy. But his mother again interfered: she wept, she exhorted, she prevailed. Means were refused, and the stripling was recalled to hang about the court, or to loiter at Ickworth, scribbling verses, and causing his father

uneasiness lest he should be too much of a poet, and too little of a public man.

Such was his youth: disappointed by not obtaining a commission in the Guards, he led a desultory, butterfly-like life; one day at Richmond with Queen Caroline, then Princess of Wales; another, at Pope's villa, at Twickenham; sometimes in the House of Commons, in which he succeeded his elder brother as member for Bury; and, at the period when he has been described as forming one of the quartett in Queen Caroline's closet at St. James's, as vice-chamberlain to his partial and royal patroness.

His early marriage with Mary Lepel, the beautiful maid of honour to Queen Caroline, insured his felicity, though it did not curb his predilections for other ladies.

Henceforth Lord Hervey lived all the year round in what were then called lodgings, that is, apartments appropriated to the royal household, or even to others, in St. James's, or at Richmond, or at Windsor. In order fully to comprehend all the intimate relations which he had with the court, it is necessary to present the reader with some account of the family of George II. Five daughters had been the female issue of his majesty's marriage with Queen Caroline. Three of these princesses, the three elder ones, had lived, during the life of George I., at St. James's with their grandfather; who, irritated by the differences between him and his son, then Prince of Wales, adopted that measure rather as showing his authority than from any affection to the young princesses. It was, in truth, difficult to say which of these royal ladies was the most unfortunate.

Anne, the eldest, had shown her spirit early in life whilst residing with George I.; she had a proud, imperious nature, and her temper was, it must be owned, put to a severe test. The only time that George I. did the English the *honour* of choosing one of the beauties of the nation for his mistress, was during the last year of his reign. The object of his choice

was Anne Brett, the eldest daughter of the infamous Countess of Macclesfield by her second husband. The neglect of Savage, the poet, her son, was merely one passage in the iniquitous life of Lady Macclesfield. Endowed with singular taste and judgment, consulted by Colley Cibber on every new play he produced, the mother of Savage was not only wholly destitute of all virtue, but of all shame. One day, looking out of the window, she perceived a very handsome man assaulted by some bailiffs who were going to arrest him: she paid his debt, released, and married him. The hero of this story was Colonel Brett, the father of Anne Brett.

The child of such a mother was not likely to be even decently-respectable; and Anne was proud of her disgraceful pre-eminence and of her disgusting and royal lover. She was dark, and her flashing black eyes resembled those of a Spanish beauty. Ten years after the death of George I., she found a husband in Sir William Leman, of Northall, and was announced, on that occasion, as the half-sister of Richard Savage.

To the society of this woman, when at St. James's, as 'Mistress Brett,' the three princesses were subjected: at the same time the Duchess of Kendal, the king's German mistress, occupied other lodgings at St. James's.

Miss Brett was to be rewarded with the coronet of a countess for her degradation, the king being absent on the occasion at Hanover; elated by her expectations, she took the liberty, during his majesty's absence, of ordering a door to be broken out of her apartment into the royal garden, where the princesses walked. The Princess Anne, not deigning to associate with her, commanded that it should be forthwith closed. Miss Brett imperiously reversed that order. In the midst of the affair, the king died suddenly, and Anne Brett's reign was over, and her influence soon as much forgotten as if she had never existed. The Princess Anne was pining in the dulness of her royal home, when a marriage with the Prince of Orange,

was proposed for the consideration of his parents. It was a miserable match as well as a miserable prospect, for the prince's revenue amounted to no more than 12,000*l.* a year; and the state and pomp to which the Princess Royal had been accustomed could not be contemplated on so small a fortune. It was still worse in point of that poor consideration, happiness. The Prince of Orange was both deformed and disgusting in his person, though his face was sensible in expression; and if he inspired one idea more strongly than another when he appeared in his uniform and cocked hat, and spoke bad French, or worse English, it was that of seeing before one a dressed-up baboon.

It was a bitter cup for the princess to drink, but she drank it: she reflected that it might be the only way of quitting a court where, in case of her father's death, she would be dependent on her brother Frederic, or on that weak prince's strong-minded wife. So she consented, and took the dwarf; and that consent was regarded by a grateful people, and by all good courtiers, as a sacrifice for the sake of Protestant principles, the House of Orange being, *par excellence*, at the head of the orthodox dynasties in Europe. A dowry of 80,000*l.* was forthwith granted by an admiring Commons—just double what had ever been given before. That sum was happily lying in the exchequer, being the purchase-money of some lands in St. Christopher's which had lately been sold; and King George was thankful to get rid of a daughter whose haughtiness gave him trouble. In person, too, the princess royal was not very ornamental to the Court. She was ill-made, with a propensity to grow fat; her complexion, otherwise very fine, was marked with the small-pox; she had, however, a lively, clean look—one of her chief beauties—and a certain royalty of manner.

The Princess Amelia died, as the world thought, single, but consoled herself with various love flirtations. The Duke of Newcastle made love to her, but her affections were

centred on the Duke of Grafton, to whom she was privately married, as is confidently asserted.

The Princess Caroline was the darling of her family. Even the king relied on her truth. When there was any dispute, he used to say, 'Send for Caroline; she will tell us the right story.'

Her fate had its clouds. Amiable, gentle, of unbounded charity, with strong affections, which were not suffered to flow in a legitimate channel, she became devotedly attached to Lord Hervey: her heart was bound up in him; his death drove her into a permanent retreat from the world. No debasing connection existed between them; but it is misery, it is sin enough to love another woman's husband—and that sin, that misery, was the lot of the royal and otherwise virtuous Caroline.

The Princess Mary, another victim to conventionalities, was united to Frederick, Landgrave of Hesse Cassel; a barbarian, from whom she escaped, whenever she could, to come, with a bleeding heart, to her English home. She was, even Horace Walpole allows, 'of the softest, mildest temper in the world,' and fondly beloved by her sister Caroline, and by the 'Butcher of Culloden,' William, Duke of Cumberland.

Louisa became Queen of Denmark in 1746, after some years' marriage to the Crown Prince. 'We are lucky,' Horace Walpole writes on that occasion, 'in the death of kings.'

The two princesses who were still under the paternal roof were contrasts. Caroline was a constant invalid, gentle, sincere, unambitious, devoted to her mother, whose death nearly killed her. Amelia affected popularity, and assumed the *esprit fort*—was fond of meddling in politics, and after the death of her mother, joined the Bedford faction, in opposition to her father. But both these princesses were outwardly submissive when Lord Hervey became the Queen's chamberlain.

The evenings at St. James's were spent in the same way as those at Kensington.

Quadrille formed her majesty's pastime, and, whilst Lord Hervey played pools of cribbage with the Princess Caroline and the maids of honour, the Duke of Cumberland amused himself and the Princess Amelia at 'buffet.' On Mondays and Fridays there were drawing-rooms held; and these receptions took place, very wisely, in the evening.

Beneath all the show of gaiety and the freezing ceremony of those stately occasions, there was in that court as much misery as family dissensions, or, to speak accurately, family hatreds can engender. Endless jealousies, which seem to us as frivolous as they were rabid; and contentions, of which even the origin is still unexplained, had long severed the queen from her eldest son. George II. had always loved his mother: his affection for the unhappy Sophia Dorothea was one of the very few traits of goodness in a character utterly vulgar, sensual, and entirely selfish. His son, Frederick, Prince of Wales, on the other hand, hated his mother. He loved neither of his parents; but the queen had the pre-eminence in his aversion.

The king, during the year 1736, was at Hanover. His return was announced, but under circumstances of danger. A tremendous storm arose just as he was prepared to embark at Helvoetsluys. All London was on the look out, weathercocks were watched; tides, winds, and moons formed the only subjects of conversation; but no one of his majesty's subjects was so demonstrative as the Prince of Wales, and his cheerfulness, and his triumph even, on the occasion, were of course resentfully heard of by the queen.

During the storm, when anxiety had almost amounted to fever, Lord Hervey dined with Sir Robert Walpole. Their conversation naturally turned on the state of affairs, prospectively. Sir Robert called the prince a 'poor, weak, irresolute, false, lying, contemptible wretch.' Lord Hervey did

not defend him, but suggested that Frederick, in case of his father's death, might be more influenced by the queen than he had hitherto been. 'Zounds, my lord,' interrupted Sir Robert, 'he would tear the flesh off her bones with red-hot irons sooner! The distinctions she shows to you, too, I believe, would not be forgotten. Then the notion he has of his great riches, and the desire he has of fingering them, would make him pinch her, and pinch her again, in order to make her buy her ease, till she had not a groat left.'

What a picture of a heartless and selfish character! The next day the queen sent for Lord Hervey, to ask him if he knew the particulars of a great dinner which the prince had given to the lord mayor the previous day, whilst the whole country, and the court in particular, was trembling for the safety of the king, his father. Lord Hervey told her that the prince's speech at the dinner was the most ingratiating piece of popularity ever heard; the healths, of course, as usual. 'Heavens!' cried the queen: 'popularity always makes me sick, but *Fritz's* popularity makes me vomit! I hear that yesterday, on the prince's side of the House, they talked of the king's being cast away with the same *sang froid* as you would talk of an overturn; and that my good son strutted about as if he had been already king. Did you mark the airs with which he came into my drawing-room in the morning? though he does not think fit to honour me with his presence, or *ennui* me with his wife's, of an evening? I felt something here in my throat that swelled and half-choked me.'

Poor Queen Caroline! with such a son, and such a husband, she must have been possessed of a more than usual share of German imperturbability to sustain her cheerfulness, writhing, as she often was, under the pangs of a long-concealed disorder, of which eventually she died. Even on the occasion of the king's return in time to spend his birthday

in England, the queen's temper had been sorely tried. Nothing had ever vexed her more than the king's admiration for Amelia Sophia Walmoden, who, after the death of Caroline, was created Countess of Yarmouth. Madame Walmoden had been a reigning belle among the young married women at Hanover, when George II. visited that country in 1735. Not that her majesty's affections were wounded; it was her pride that was hurt by the idea that people would think that this Hanoverian lady had more influence than she had. In other respects the king's absence was a relief: she had the *éclat* of the regency; she had the comfort of having the hours which her royal torment decreed were to be passed in amusing his dulness, to herself; she was free from his 'quotidian sallies of temper, which,' as Lord Hervey relates, 'let it be charged by what hand it would, used always to discharge its hottest fire, on some pretence or other, upon her."

It is quite true that from the first dawn of his preference for Madame Walmoden, the king wrote circumstantial letters of fifty or sixty pages to the queen, informing her of every stage of the affair; the queen, in reply, saying that she was only *one* woman, and an old woman, and adding, 'that he might love *more and younger women.*' In return, the king wrote, 'You must love the Walmoden, for she loves *you*;' a civil insult, which he accompanied with so minute a description of his new favourite, that the queen, had she been a painter, might have drawn her portrait at a hundred miles' distance.

The queen, subservient as she seemed, felt the humiliation. Such was the debased nature of George II. that he not only wrote letters unworthy of a man to write, and unfit for a woman to read, to his wife, but he desired her to show them to Sir Robert Walpole. He used to 'tag several paragraphs,' as Lord Hervey expresses it, with these words, '*Montrez ceci, et consultez la-dessus de gros homme*,' meaning Sir Robert. But this was only a portion of the disgusting

disclosures made by the vulgar, licentious monarch to his too degraded consort.

In the bitterness of her mortification the queen consulted Lord Hervey and Sir Robert as to the possibility of her losing her influence, should she resent the king's delay in returning. They agreed, that her taking the '*fière* turn' would ruin her with her royal consort; Sir Robert adding, that if he had a mind to flatter her into her ruin, he might talk to her as if she were twenty-five, and try to make her imagine that she could bring the king back by the apprehension of losing her affection. He said it was now too late in her life to try new methods; she must persist in the soothing, coaxing, submissive arts which had been practised with success, and even press his majesty to bring this woman to England! 'He taught her,' says Lord Hervey, 'this hard lesson till she *wept*.' Nevertheless, the queen expressed her gratitude to the minister for his advice. 'My lord,' said Walpole to Hervey, 'she laid her thanks on me so thick that I found I had gone too far, for I am never so much afraid of her rebukes as of her commendations.'

Such was the state of affairs between this singular couple. Nevertheless, the queen, not from attachment to the king, but from the horror she had of her son's reigning, felt such fears of the prince's succeeding to the throne as she could hardly express. He would, she was convinced, do all he could to ruin and injure her in case of his accession to the throne.

The consolation of such a friend as Lord Hervey can easily be conceived, when he told her majesty that he had resolved, in case the king had been lost at sea, to have retired from her service, in order to prevent any jealousy or irritation that might arise from his supposed influence with her majesty. The queen stopped him short, and said, 'No, my lord, I should never have suffered that; you are one of the greatest pleasures of my life. But did I love you less than I

do, or less like to have you about me, I should look upon the suffering you to be taken from me as such a meanness and baseness that you should not have stirred an inch from me. You,' she added, 'should have gone with me to Somerset House;' (which was hers in case of the king's death). She then told him she should have begged Sir Robert Walpole on her knees not to have sent in his resignation.

The animosity of the Prince of Wales to Lord Hervey augmented, there can be no doubt, his unnatural aversion to the queen, an aversion which he evinced early in life. There was a beautiful, giddy maid of honour, who attracted not only the attention of Frederick, but the rival attentions of other suitors, and among them, the most favoured was said to be Lord Hervey, notwithstanding that he had then been for some years the husband of one of the loveliest ornaments of the court, the sensible and virtuous Mary Lepel. Miss Vane became eventually the avowed favourite of the prince, and after giving birth to a son, who was christened FitzFrederick Vane, and who died in 1736, his unhappy mother died a few months afterwards. It is melancholy to read a letter from Lady Hervey to Mrs. Howard, portraying the frolic and levity of this once joyous creature, among the other maids of honour; and her strictures show at once the unrefined nature of the pranks in which they indulged, and her once sobriety of demeanour.

She speaks, on one occasion, in which, however, Miss Vane did not share the nocturnal diversion, of some of the maids of honour being out in the winter all night in the gardens at Kensington—opening and rattling the windows, and trying to frighten people out of their wits; and she gives Mrs. Howard a hint that the queen ought to be informed of the way in which her young attendants amused themselves. After levities such as these, it is not surprising to find poor Miss Vane writing to Mrs. Howard, with complaints that she was unjustly aspersed, and referring to her relatives, Lady

Betty Nightingale and Lady Hewet, in testimony of the falsehood of reports which, unhappily, the event verified.

The prince, however, never forgave Lord Hervey for being his rival with Miss Vane, nor his mother for her favours to Lord Hervey. In vain did the queen endeavour to reconcile Fritz, as she called him, to his father;—nothing could be done in a case where the one was all dogged selfishness; and where the other, the idol of the opposition party, as the prince had ever been, so *legère de tête* as to swallow all the adulation offered to him, and to believe himself a demigod. 'The queen's dread of a rival,' Horace Walpole remarks, 'was a feminine weakness: the behaviour of her eldest son was a real thorn.' Some time before his marriage to a princess who was supposed to augment his hatred of his mother, Frederick of Wales had contemplated an act of disobedience. Soon after his arrival in England, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, hearing that he was in want of money, had sent to offer him her granddaughter, Lady Diana Spencer, with a fortune of 100,000*l*. The prince accepted the young lady, and a day was fixed for his marriage in the duchess's lodge at the Great Park, Windsor. But Sir Robert Walpole, getting intelligence of the plot, the nuptials were stopped. The duchess never forgave either Walpole or the royal family, and took an early opportunity of insulting the latter. When the Prince of Orange came over to marry the Princess Royal, a sort of boarded gallery was erected from the windows of the great drawing-room of that palace, and was constructed so as to cross the garden to the Lutheran chapel in the Friary, where the duchess lived. The Prince of Orange being ill, went to Bath, and the marriage was delayed for some weeks. Meantime the windows of Marlborough House were darkened by the gallery. 'I wonder,' cried the old duchess, 'when my neighbour George will take away his orange-chest!' The structure, with its pent-house roof, really resembling an orange-chest.

Mary Lepel, Lady Hervey, whose attractions, great as they were, proved insufficient to rivet the exclusive admiration of the accomplished Hervey, had become his wife in 1720, some time before her husband had been completely enthralled with the gilded prison doors of a court. She was endowed with that intellectual beauty calculated to attract a man of talent: she was highly educated, of great talent; possessed of *savoir faire*, infinite good temper, and a strict sense of duty. She also derived from her father, Brigadier Lepel, who was of an ancient family in Sark, a considerable fortune. Good and correct as she was, Lady Hervey viewed with a fashionable composure the various intimacies formed during the course of their married life by his lordship.

The fact is, that the aim of both was not so much to insure their domestic felicity as to gratify their ambition. Probably they were disappointed in both these aims—certainly in one of them: talented, indefatigable, popular, lively, and courteous, Lord Hervey, in the House of Commons, advocated in vain, in brilliant orations, the measures of Walpole. Twelve years, fourteen years elapsed, and he was left in the somewhat subordinate position of vice-chamberlain, in spite of that high order of talents which he possessed, and which would have been displayed to advantage in a graver scene. The fact has been explained: the queen could not do without him; she confided in him; her daughter loved him; and his influence in that court was too powerful for Walpole to dispense with an aid so valuable to his own plans. Some episodes in a life thus frittered away, until, too late, promotion came, alleviated his existence, and gave his wife only a passing uneasiness, if even indeed they imparted a pang.

One of these was his dangerous passion for Miss Vane; another, his platonic attachment to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Whilst he lived on the terms with his wife which is de-

scribed even by the French as being a '*Ménage de Paris*,' Lord Hervey found in another quarter the sympathies which, as a husband, he was too well-bred to require. It is probable that he always admired his wife more than any other person, for she had qualities that were quite congenial to the tastes of a wit and a beau in those times. Lady Hervey was not only singularly captivating, young, gay, and handsome; but a complete model also of the polished, courteous, high-bred woman of fashion. Her manners are said by Lady Louisa Stuart to have 'had a foreign tinge, which some called affected; but they were gentle, easy, and altogether exquisitely pleasing.' She was in secret a Jacobite—and resembled in that respect most of the fine ladies in Great Britain. Whiggery and Walpolism were vulgar: it was *haut ton* to take offence when James II. was anathematized, and quite good taste to hint that some people wished well to the Chevalier's attempts: and this way of speaking owed its fashion probably to Frederick of Wales, whose interest in Flora Macdonald, and whose concern for the exiled family, were among the few amiable traits of his disposition. Perhaps they arose from a wish to plague his parents, rather than from a greatness of character foreign to this prince.

Lady Hervey was in the bloom of youth, Lady Mary in the zenith of her age, when they became rivals: Lady Mary had once excited the jealousy of Queen Caroline when Princess of Wales.

'How becomingly Lady Mary is dressed to-night,' whispered George II. to his wife, whom he had called up from the card-table to impart to her that important conviction. 'Lady Mary always dresses well,' was the cold and curt reply.

Lord Hervey had been married about seven years when Lady Mary Wortley Montagu re-appeared at the court of Queen Caroline, after her long residence in Turkey. Lord Hervey was thirty-three years of age; Lady Mary was verging on forty. She was still a pretty woman, with a piquant,

neat-featured face; which does not seem to have done any justice to a mind at once masculine and sensitive, nor to a heart capable of benevolence—capable of strong attachments, and of bitter hatred.

Like Lady Hervey, she lived with her husband on well-bred terms: there existed no quarrel between them; no avowed ground of coldness; it was the icy boundary of frozen feeling that severed them; the sure and lasting though polite destroyer of all bonds, indifference. Lady Mary was full of repartee, of poetry, of anecdote, and was not averse to admiration; but she was essentially a woman of common sense, of views enlarged by travel, and of ostensibly good principles. A woman of delicacy was not to be found in those days, any more than other productions of the nineteenth century: a telegraphic message would have been almost as startling to a courtly ear as the refusal of a fine lady to suffer a *double entendre*. Lady Mary was above all scruples, and Lord Hervey, who had lived too long with George II. and his queen to have the moral sense in perfection, liked her all the better for her courage—her merry, licentious jokes, and her putting things down by their right names, on which Lady Mary plumed herself: she was what they term in the north of England, 'Emancipated.' They formed an old acquaintance with a confidential, if not a tender friendship; and that their intimacy was unpleasant to Lady Hervey was proved by her refusal—when, after the grave had closed over Lord Hervey, late in life, Lady Mary ill, and broken down by age, returned to die in England—to resume an acquaintance which had been a painful one to her.

Lord Hervey was a martyr to illness of an epileptic character; and Lady Mary gave him her sympathy. She was somewhat of a doctor—and being older than her friend, may have had the art of soothing sufferings, which were the worse because they were concealed. Whilst he writhed in pain, he was obliged to give vent to his agony by alleging that an

attack of cramp bent him double: yet he lived by rule—a rule harder to adhere to than that of the most conscientious homœopath in the present day. In the midst of court gaieties and the duties of office, he thus wrote to Dr. Cheyne:—

. . . 'To let you know that I continue one of your most pious votaries, and to tell you the method I am in. In the first place, I never take wine nor malt drink, nor any liquid but water and milk-tea; in the next, I eat no meat but the whitest, youngest, and tenderest, nine times in ten nothing but chicken, and never more than the quantity of a small one at a meal. I seldom eat any supper, but if any, nothing absolutely but bread and water; two days in the week I eat no flesh; my breakfast is dry biscuit, not sweet, and green tea; I have left off butter as bilious; I eat no salt, nor any sauce but bread-sauce.'

Among the most cherished relaxations of the royal household were visits to Twickenham, whilst the court was at Richmond. The River Thames, which has borne on its waves so much misery in olden times—which was the highway from the Star-chamber to the Tower—which has been belaboured in our days with so much wealth, and sullied with so much impurity; that river, whose current is one hour rich as the stream of a gold river, the next hour, foul as the pestilent churchyard,—was then, especially between Richmond and Teddington, a glassy, placid stream, reflecting on its margin the chestnut-trees of stately Ham, and the reeds and wild flowers which grew undisturbed in the fertile meadows of Petersham.

Lord Hervey, with the ladies of the court, Mrs. Howard as their chaperon, delighted in being wafted to that village, so rich in names which give to Twickenham undying associations with the departed great. Sometimes the effeminate valetudinarian, Hervey, was content to attend the Princess Caroline to Marble Hill only, a villa residence built by

George II. for Mrs. Howard, and often referred to in the correspondence of that period. Sometimes the royal barge, with its rowers in scarlet jackets, was seen conveying the gay party; ladies in slouched hats, pointed over fair brows in front, with a fold of sarsenet round them, terminated in a long bow and ends behind—with deep falling mantles over dresses never cognizant of crinoline: gentlemen, with cocked-hats, their bag-wigs and ties appearing behind; and beneath their puce-coloured coats, delicate silk tights and gossamer stockings were visible, as they trod the mossy lawn of the Palace Gardens at Richmond, or, followed by a tiny grey-hound, prepared for the lazy pleasures of the day.

Sometimes the visit was private; the sickly Princess Caroline had a fancy to make one of the group who are bound to Pope's villa. Twickenham, where that great little man had, since 1715, established himself, was pronounced by Lord Bacon to be the finest place in the world for study. 'Let Twitnam Park,' he wrote to his steward, Thomas Bushell, 'which I sold in my younger days, be purchased, if possible, for a residence for such deserving persons to study in, (since I experimentally found the situation of that place much convenient for the trial of my philosophical conclusions) —expressed in a paper sealed, to the trust—which I myself had put in practice and settled the same by act of parliament, if the vicissitudes of fortune had not intervened and prevented me.'

Twickenham continued, long after Bacon had penned this injunction, to be the retreat of the poet, the statesman, the scholar; the haven where the retired actress, and broken novelist found peace; the abode of Henry Fielding, who lived in one of the back-streets; the temporary refuge, from the world of London, of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and the life-long home of Pope.

Let us picture to ourselves a visit from the princess to Pope's villa:—As the barge, following the gentle bendings of

Pope at his Villa—Distinguished Visitors. Vol. 1., p. 237.

the river, nears Twickenham, a richer green, a summer-brightness, indicates it is approaching that spot of which even Bishop Warburton says that 'the beauty of the owner's poetic genius appeared to as much advantage in the disposition of these romantic materials as in any of his best-contrived poems.' And the loved toil which formed the quincunx, which perforated and extended the grotto until it extended across the road to a garden on the opposite side—the toil which showed the gentler parts of Pope's better nature—has been respected, and its effects preserved. The enamelled lawn, green as no other grass save that by the Thames side is green, is swept still by the light boughs of the famed willow. Every memorial of the bard was treasured by the gracious hands into which, after 1744, the classic spot fell—those of Sir William Stanhope.

In the subterranean passage this verse appears; adulatory it must be confessed:—

> 'The humble roof, the garden's scanty line,
> Ill suit the genius of the bard divine;
> But fancy now assumes a fairer scope,
> And Stanhope's plans unfold the soul of Pope.'

It should have been Stanhope's 'gold,'—a metal which was not so abundant, nor indeed so much wanted in Pope's time as in our own.

As the barge is moored close to the low steps which lead up from the river to the villa, a diminutive figure, then in its prime (if prime it *ever* had), is seen moving impatiently forward. By that young-old face, with its large lucid speaking eyes that light it up, as does a rushlight in a cavern—by that twisted figure with its emaciated legs—by the large, sensible mouth, the pointed, marked, well-defined nose—by the wig, or hair pushed off in masses from the broad forehead and falling behind in tresses—by the dress, that loose, single-breasted black coat—by the cambric band and plaited shirt, without a frill, but fine and white, for the poor poet has taken

infinite pains that day in self-adornment—by the delicate ruffle on that large thin hand, and still more by the clear, most musical voice which is heard welcoming his royal and noble guests, as he stands bowing low to the Princess Caroline, and bending to kiss hands—by that voice which gained him more especially the name of the little nightingale—is Pope at once recognized, and Pope in the perfection of his days, in the very zenith of his fame.

One would gladly have been a sprite to listen from some twig of that then stripling willow which the poet had planted with his own hand, to the talk of those who chatted for a while under its shade, before they went in-doors to an elegant dinner at the usual hour of twelve. How delightful to hear, unseen, the repartees of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who comes down, it is natural to conclude, from her villa near to that of Pope. How fine a study might one not draw of the fine gentleman and the wit in Lord Hervey, as he is commanded by the gentle Princess Caroline to sit on her right hand; but his heart is across the table, with Lady Mary! How amusing to observe the dainty but not sumptuous repast contrived with Pope's exquisite taste, but regulated by his habitual economy—for his late father, a worthy Jacobite hatter, erst in the Strand, disdained to invest the fortune he had amassed, from the extensive sale of cocked-hats, in the Funds, over which a Hanoverian stranger ruled; but had lived on his capital of 20,000*l.*, as spendthrifts do (without either moral, religious, or political reasons), as long as it lasted him; yet *he* was no spendthrift. Let us look, therefore, with a liberal eye, noting, as we stand, how that fortune, in league with nature, who made the poet crooked, had maimed two of his fingers, such time as, passing a bridge, the poor little poet was overturned into the river, and he would have been drowned, had not the postilion broken the coach window and dragged the tiny body through the aperture. We mark, however, that he generally contrives to hide this defect, as he

would fain have hidden every other from the lynx eyes of Lady Mary, who knows him, however, thoroughly, and reads every line of that poor little heart of his, enamoured of her as it was.

Then the conversation! How gladly would we catch here some drops of what must have been the very essence of small-talk, and small-talk is the only thing fit for early dinners! Our host is noted for his easy address, his engaging manners, his delicacy, politeness, and a certain tact he had of showing every guest that he was welcome in the choicest expressions and most elegant terms. Then Lady Mary! how brilliant is her slightest turn! how she banters Pope—how she gives *double entendre* for *double entendre* to Hervey! How sensible, yet how gay is all she says; how bright, how cutting, yet how polished is the *equivoque* of the witty, high-bred Hervey! He is happy that day—away from the coarse, passionate king, whom he hated with a hatred that burns itself out in his lordship's 'Memoirs;' away from the somewhat exacting and pitiable queen; away from the hated Pelham, and the rival Grafton.

And conversation never flags when all, more or less, are congenial; when all are well-informed, well-bred, and resolved to please. Yet there is a canker in that whole assembly; that canker is a want of confidence: no one trusts the other; Lady Mary's encouragement of Hervey surprises and shocks the Princess Caroline, who loves him secretly; Hervey's attentions to the queen of letters scandalizes Pope, who soon afterwards makes a declaration to Lady Mary. Pope writhes under a lash, just held over him by Lady Mary's hand. Hervey feels that the poet, though all suavity, is ready to demolish him at any moment, if he can; and the only really happy and complacent person of the whole party is, perhaps, Pope's old mother, who sits in the room next to that occupied for dinner, industriously spinning.

This happy state of things came, however, as is often the

case, in close intimacies, to a painful conclusion. There was too little reality, too little earnestness of feeling, for the friendship between Pope and Lady Mary, including Lord Hervey, to last long. His lordship had his affectations, and his effeminate nicety was proverbial. One day being asked at dinner if he would take some beef, he is reported to have answered, 'Beef? oh no! faugh! don't you know I never eat beef, nor *horse*, nor curry, nor any of those things?' Poor man! it was probably a pleasant way of turning off what he may have deemed an assault on a digestion that could hardly conquer any solid food. This affectation offended Lady Mary, whose *mot*, that there were three species, 'Men, women, and Herveys'—implies a perfect perception of the eccentricities even of her gifted friend, Lord Hervey, whose mother's friend she had been, and the object of whose admiration she undoubtedly was.

Pope, who was the most irritable of men, never forgot or forgave even the most trifling offence. Lady Bolingbroke truly said of him, that he played the politician about cabbages and salads, and everybody agrees that he could hardly tolerate the wit that was more successful than his own. It was about the year 1725, that he began to hate Lord Hervey with such a hatred as only he could feel; it was unmitigated by a single touch of generosity or of compassion. Pope afterwards owned that his acquaintance with Lady Mary and with Hervey was discontinued, merely because they had too much wit for him. Towards the latter end of 1732, 'The Imitation of the Second Satire of the First Book of Horace,' appeared, and in it Pope attacked Lady Mary with the grossest and most indecent couplet ever printed: she was called Sappho, and Hervey, Lord Fanny; and all the world knew the characters at once.

In retaliation for this satire, appeared 'Verses to the Imitator of Horace;' said to have been the joint production of Lord Hervey and Lady Mary. This was followed by a

piece entitled 'Letter from a Nobleman at Hampton Court to a Doctor of Divinity.' To this composition Lord Hervey, its sole author, added these lines, by way, as it seems, of extenuation.

Pope's first reply was in a prose letter, on which Dr. Johnson has passed a condemnation. 'It exhibits,' he says, 'nothing but tedious malignity.' But he was partial to the Herveys, Thomas and Henry Hervey, Lord Hervey's brothers, having been kind to him—'If you call a dog *Hervey*,' he said to Boswell, 'I shall love him.'

Next came the epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, in which every infirmity and peculiarity of Hervey are handed down in calm, cruel irony, and polished verses, to posterity. The verses are almost too disgusting to be revived in an age which disclaims scurrility. After the most personal rancorous invective, he thus writes of Lord Hervey's conversation:—

> 'His wit all see-saw between this and *that*—
> Now high, now low—now *master* up, now *miss*—
> And he himself one vile antithesis.
> * * * *
> Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
> Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
> Eve's tempter, thus the rabbins have expressed—
> A cherub's face—a reptile all the rest.
> Beauty that shocks you, facts that none can trust,
> Wit that can creep, and pride that bites the dust.'

'It is impossible,' Mr. Croker thinks, 'not to admire, however we may condemn, the art by which acknowledged wit, beauty, and gentle manners—the queen's favour—and even a valetudinary diet, are travestied into the most odious offences.'

Pope, in two lines, pointed to the intimacy between Lady Mary and Lord Hervey:—

> 'Once, and but once, this heedless youth was hit,
> And liked that dangerous thing, a female wit.'

Nevertheless, he *afterwards* pretended that the name *Sappho* was not applied to Lady Mary, but to women in general; and acted with a degree of mean prevarication which greatly added to the amount of his offence.

The quarrel with Pope was not the only attack which Lord Hervey had to encounter. Among the most zealous of his foes was Pulteney, afterwards Lord Bath, the rival of Sir Robert Walpole, and the confederate with Bolingbroke in opposing that minister. The 'Craftsman,' a paper in the Whig interest, contained an attack on Pulteney, written, with great ability, by Hervey. It provoked a *Reply* from Pulteney. In this composition he spoke of Hervey as 'a thing below contempt,' and ridiculed his personal appearance in the grossest terms. A duel was the result, the parties meeting behind Arlington House, in Piccadilly, where Mr. Pulteney had the satisfaction of almost running Lord Hervey through with his sword: Luckily the poor man slipped down, so the blow was evaded, and the seconds interfered: Mr. Pulteney then embraced Lord Hervey, and expressing his regret for their quarrel, declared that he would never again, either in speech or writing, attack his lordship. Lord Hervey only bowed, in silence; and thus they parted.

The queen having observed what an alteration in the palace Lord Hervey's death would cause, he said he could guess how it would be, and he produced 'The Death of Lord Hervey; or, a Morning at Court; a Drama:' the idea being taken, it is thought, from Swift's verses on his own death, of which Hervey might have seen a surreptitious copy. The following scene will give some idea of the plot and structure of this amusing little piece. The part allotted to the Princess Caroline is in unison with the idea prevalent of her attachment to Lord Hervey:—

ACT I.

SCENE: *The Queen's Gallery. The time, nine in the morning.*

Enter the QUEEN, PRINCESS EMILY, PRINCESS CAROLINE, *followed by* LORD LIFFORD, *and* MRS. PURCEL.

Queen. Mon Dieu, quelle chaleur! en vérité on étouffe. Pray open a little those windows.

Lord Lifford. Hasa your Majesty heara de news?

Queen. What news, my dear Lord?

Lord Lifford. Dat my Lord Hervey, as he was coming last night to *tone*, was rob and murdered by highwaymen and tron in a ditch.

Princess Caroline. Eh! grand Dieu!

Queen. [*striking her hand upon her knee*] Comment est-il véritablement mort? Purcel, my angel, shall I not have a little breakfast?

Mrs. Purcel. What would your Majesty please to have?

Queen. A little chocolate, my soul, if you give me leave, and a little sour cream, and some fruit. [*Exit* MRS. PURCEL.

Queen. [*to Lord Lifford.*] Eh bien! my Lord Lifford, dites-nous un peu comment cela est arrivé. I cannot imagine what he had to do to be putting his nose there. Seulement pour un sot voyage avec ce petit mousse, eh bien?

Lord Lifford. Madame, on sçait quelque chose de celai de Mon. Maran, qui d'abord qu'il a vu les voleurs s'est enfin et venu à grand galoppe à Londres, and after dat a waggoner take up the body and put it in his cart.

Queen. [*to* PRINCESS EMILY.] Are you not ashamed, Amalie, to laugh?

Princess Emily. I only laughed at the cart, mamma.

Queen. Oh! that is a very fade plaisanterie.

Princess Emily. But if I may say it, mamma, I am not very sorry.

Queen. Oh! fie donc! Eh bien! my Lord Lifford! My God! where is this chocolate, Purcel?

As Mr. Croker remarks, Queen Caroline's breakfast-table, and her parentheses, reminds one of the card-table conversation of Swift:—

> 'The Dean's dead: (pray what are trumps?)
> Then Lord have mercy on his soul!
> (Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)
> Six Deans, they say, must bear the pall;
> (I wish I knew what king to call.)

Fragile as was Lord Hervey's constitution, it was his lot to witness the death-bed of the queen, for whose amusement

he had penned the jeu d'esprit just quoted, in which there was, perhaps, as much truth as wit.

The wretched Queen Caroline had, during fourteen years, concealed from every one, except Lady Sundon, an incurable disorder, that of hernia. In November (1737) she was attacked with what we should now call English cholera. Dr. Tessier, her house-physician, was called in, and gave her Daffey's elixir, which was not likely to afford any relief to the deep-seated cause of her sufferings. She held a drawing-room that night for the last time, and played at cards, even cheerfully. At length she whispered to Lord Hervey, 'I am not able to entertain people.' 'For heaven's sake, madam,' was the reply, 'go to your room: would to heaven the king would leave off talking of the Dragon of Wantley, and release you!' The Dragon of Wantley was a burlesque on the Italian opera, by Henry Carey, and was the theme of the fashionable world.

The next day the queen was in fearful agony, very hot, and willing to take anything proposed. Still she did not, even to Lord Hervey, avow the real cause of her illness. None of the most learned court physicians, neither Mead nor Wilmot, were called in. Lord Hervey sat by the queen's bed-side, and tried to soothe her, whilst the Princess Caroline joined in begging him to give her mother something to relieve her agony. At length, in utter ignorance of the case, it was proposed to give her some snakeroot, a stimulant, and, at the same time, Sir Walter Raleigh's cordial; so singular was it thus to find that great mind still influencing a court. It was that very medicine which was administered by Queen Anne of Denmark, however, to Prince Henry; that medicine which Raleigh said, 'would cure him, or any other, of a disease, except in case of poison.'

However, Ranby, house-surgeon to the king, and a favourite of Lord Hervey's, assuring him that a cordial with this name or that name was mere quackery, some usquebaugh was given

instead, but was rejected by the queen soon afterwards. At last Raleigh's cordial was administered, but also rejected about an hour afterwards. Her fever, after taking Raleigh's cordial, was so much increased, that she was ordered instantly to be bled.

Then, even, the queen never disclosed the fact that could alone dictate the course to be pursued. George II., with more feeling than judgment, slept on the outside of the queen's bed all that night; so that the unhappy invalid could get no rest, nor change her position, not daring to irritate the king's temper.

The next day the queen said touchingly to her gentle, affectionate daughter, herself in declining health, 'Poor Caroline! you are very ill, too; we shall soon meet again in another place.'

Meantime, though the queen declared to every one that she was sure nothing could save her, it was resolved to hold a *levée*. The foreign ministers were to come to court, and the king, in the midst of his real grief, did not forget to send word to his pages to be sure to have his last new ruffles sewed on the shirt he was to put on that day; a trifle which often, as Lord Hervey remarks, shows more of the real character than events of importance, from which one frequently knows no more of a person's state of mind than one does of his natural gait from his dancing.

Lady Sundon was, meantime, ill at Bath, so that the queen's secret rested alone in her own heart. 'I have an ill,' she said, one evening, to her daughter Caroline, 'that nobody knows of.' Still, neither the princess nor Lord Hervey could guess at the full meaning of that sad assertion.

The famous Sir Hans Sloane was then called in; but no remedy except large and repeated bleedings were suggested, and blisters were put on her legs. There seems to have been no means left untried by the faculty to hasten the catastrophe—thus working in the dark.

The king now sat up with her whom he had so cruelly wounded in every nice feeling. On being asked, by Lord Hervey, what was to be done in case the Prince of Wales should come to inquire after the queen? he answered in the following terms, worthy of his ancestry—worthy of himself. It is difficult to say which was the most painful scene, that in the chamber where the queen lay in agony, or without, where the curse of family dissensions came like a ghoul to hover near the bed of death, and to gloat over the royal corpse. This was the royal dictum:—'If the puppy should, in one of his impertinent airs of duty and affection, dare to come to St. James's, I order you to go to the scoundrel, and tell him I wonder at his impudence for daring to come here; that he has my orders already, and knows my pleasure, and bid him go about his business; for his poor mother is not in a condition to see him act his false, whining, cringing tricks now, nor am I in a humour to bear with his impertinence; and bid him trouble me with no more messages, but get out of my house.'

In the evening, whilst Lord Hervey sat at tea in the queen's outer apartment with the Duke of Cumberland, a page came to the duke to speak to the prince in the passage. It was to prefer a request to see his mother. This message was conveyed by Lord Hervey to the king, whose reply was uttered in the most vehement rage possible. 'This,' said he, 'is like one of his scoundrel tricks; it is just of a piece with his kneeling down in the dirt before the mob to kiss her hand at the coach door when she came home from Hampton Court to see the princess, though he had not spoken one word to her during her whole visit. I always hated the rascal, but now I hate him worse than ever. He wants to come and insult his poor dying mother; but she shall not see him; you have heard her, and all my daughters have heard her, very often this year at Hampton Court desire me if she should be ill, and out of her senses, that I would

never let him come near her; and whilst she had her senses she was sure she should never desire it. No, no! he shall not come and act any of his silly plays here.'

In the afternoon the queen said to the king, she wondered the *Griff*, a nickname she gave to the prince, had not sent to inquire after her yet; it would be so like one of his *paroitres*. 'Sooner or later,' she added, 'I am sure we shall be plagued with some message of that sort, because he will think it will have a good air in the world to ask to see me; and, perhaps, hopes I shall be fool enough to let him come, and give him the pleasure of seeing the last breath go out of my body, by which means he would have the joy of knowing I was dead five minutes sooner than he could know it in Pall Mall.'

She afterwards declared that nothing would induce her to see him except the king's absolute commands. 'Therefore, if I grow worse,' she said, 'and should I be weak enough to talk of seeing him, I beg you, sir, to conclude that I doat—or rave.'

The king, who had long since guessed at the queen's disease, urged her now to permit him to name it to her physicians. She begged him not to do so; and for the first time, and the last, the unhappy woman spoke peevishly and warmly. Then Ranby, the house-surgeon, who had by this time discovered the truth, said, 'There is no more time to be lost; your majesty has concealed the truth too long; I beg another surgeon may be called in immediately.'

The queen, who had, in her passion, started up in her bed, lay down again, turned her head on the other side, and, as the king told Lord Hervey, 'shed the only tear he ever saw her shed whilst she was ill.'

At length, too late, other and more sensible means were resorted to: but the queen's strength was failing fast. It must have been a strange scene in that chamber of death. Much as the king really grieved for the queen's state, he was

still sufficiently collected to grieve also lest Richmond Lodge, which was settled on the queen, should go to the hated *Griff*:* and he actually sent Lord Hervey to the lord chancellor to inquire about that point. It was decided that the queen could make a will, so the king informed her of his inquiries, in order to set her mind at ease, and to assure her it was impossible that the prince could in any way benefit pecuniarily from her death. The Princess Emily now sat up with her mother. The king went to bed. The Princess Caroline slept on a couch in the antechamber, and Lord Hervey lay on a mattress on the floor at the foot of the Princess Caroline's couch.

On the following day (four after the first attack) mortification came on, and the weeping Princess Caroline and Lord Hervey were informed that the queen could not hold out many hours. Lord Hervey was ordered to withdraw. The king, the Duke of Cumberland, and the queen's four daughters alone remained, the queen begging them not to leave her until she expired; yet her life was prolonged many days.

When alone with her family, she took from her finger a ruby ring, which had been placed on it at the time of the coronation, and gave it to the king. 'This is the last thing,' she said, 'I have to give you; naked I came to you, and naked I go from you; I had everything I ever possessed from you, and to you whatever I have I return.' She then asked for her keys, and gave them to the king. To the Princess Caroline she intrusted the care of her younger sisters; to the Duke of Cumberland, that of keeping up the credit of the family. 'Attempt nothing against your brother, and endeavour to mortify him by showing superior merit,' she said to him. She advised the king to marry again; he heard her in sobs, and with much difficulty got out this sentence: '*Non, j'aurai des maitresses.*' To which the queen made no other reply than '*Ah, mon Dieu! cela n'empêche pas.*' 'I

* Prince Frederick.

know,' says Lord Hervey, in his Memoirs, 'that this episode will hardly be credited, but it is literally true.'

She then fancied she could sleep. The king kissed her, and wept over her; yet when she asked for her watch, which hung near the chimney, that she might give him the seal to take care of, his brutal temper broke forth. In the midst of his tears he called out, in a loud voice, 'Let it alone! *mon Dieu!* the queen has such strange fancies; who should meddle with your seal? It is as safe there as in my pocket.'

The queen then thought she could sleep, and, in fact, sank to rest. She felt refreshed on awakening and said, 'I wish it was over; it is only a reprieve to make me suffer a little longer; I cannot recover, but my nasty heart will not break yet.' She had an impression that she should die on a Wednesday: she had, she said, been born on a Wednesday, married on a Wednesday, crowned on a Wednesday, her first child was born on a Wednesday, and she had heard of the late king's death on a Wednesday.

On the ensuing day she saw Sir Robert Walpole. 'My good Sir Robert,' she thus addressed him, 'you see me in a very indifferent situation. I have nothing to say to you but to recommend the king, my children, and the kingdom to your care.'

Lord Hervey, when the minister retired, asked him what he thought of the queen's state.

'My lord,' was the reply, 'she is as much dead as if she was in her coffin; if ever I heard a corpse speak, it was just now in that room!'

It was a sad, an awful death-bed. The Prince of Wales having sent to inquire after the health of his dying mother, the queen became uneasy lest he should hear the true state of her case, asking 'if no one would send those ravens,' meaning the prince's attendants, out of the house. 'They were only,' she said, 'watching her death, and would gladly tear her to pieces whilst she was alive.' Whilst thus she

spoke of her son's courtiers, that son was sitting up all night in his house in Pall Mall, and saying, when any messenger came in from St. James's, 'Well, sure, we shall soon have good news, she cannot hold out much longer.' And the princesses were writing letters to prevent the Princess Royal from coming to England, where she was certain to meet with brutal unkindness from her father, who could not endure to be put to any expense. Orders were, indeed, sent to stop her if she set out. She came, however, on pretence of taking the Bath waters; but George II., furious at her disobedience, obliged her to go direct to and from Bath without stopping, and never forgave her.

Notwithstanding her predictions, the queen survived the fatal Wednesday. Until this time no prelate had been called in to pray by her majesty, nor to administer the Holy Communion; and as people about the court began to be scandalized by this omission, Sir Robert Walpole advised that the Archbishop of Canterbury should be sent for: his opinion was couched in the following terms, characteristic at once of the man, the times, and the court:—

'Pray, madam,' he said to the Princess Emily, 'let this farce be played; the archbishop will act it very well. You may bid him be as short as you will: it will do the queen no hurt, no more than any good; and it will satisfy all the wise and good fools who will call us atheists if we don't pretend to be as great fools as they are.'

Unhappily, Lord Hervey, who relates this anecdote, was himself an unbeliever; yet the scoffing tone adopted by Sir Robert seems to have shocked even him.

In consequence of this advice, Archbishop Potter prayed by the queen morning and evening, the king always quitting the room when his grace entered it. Her children, however, knelt by her bedside. Still the whisperers who censured were unsatisfied—the concession was thrown away. Why did not the queen receive the communion? Was it, as the

world believed, either 'that she had reasoned herself into a very low and cold assent to Christianity?' or 'that she was heterodox;' or 'that the archbishop refused to administer the sacrament until she should be reconciled to her son?' Even Lord Hervey, who rarely left the antechamber, has only by his silence proved that she did *not* take the communion. That antechamber was crowded with persons who, as the prelate left the chamber of death, crowded around, eagerly asking, 'Has the queen received?' 'Her Majesty,' was the evasive reply, 'is in a heavenly disposition:' the public were thus deceived. Among those who were near the queen at this solemn hour was Dr. Butler, author of the 'Analogy.' He had been made clerk of the closet, and became, after the queen's death, Bishop of Bristol. He was in a remote living in Durham, when the queen, remembering that it was long since she had heard of him, asked the Archbishop of York 'whether Dr. Butler was dead?'—'No, madam,' replied that prelate (Dr. Blackburn), 'but he is buried;' upon which she had sent for him to court. Yet he was not courageous enough, it seems, to speak to her of her son and of the duty of reconciliation; whether she ever sent the prince any message or not is uncertain; Lord Hervey is silent on that point, so that it is to be feared that Lord Chesterfield's line—

'And, unforgiving, unforgiven, dies!'

had but too sure a foundation in fact; so that Pope's sarcastic verses—

'Hang the sad verse on Carolina's urn,
And hail her passage to the realms of rest;
All *parts performed*, and *all* her children blest,'

may have been but too just, though cruelly bitter. The queen lingered till the 20th of November. During that interval of agony her consort was perpetually boasting to every one of her virtues, her sense, her patience, her softness,

her delicacy; and ending with the praise, '*Comme elle soutenoit sa dignité avec grace, avec politesse, avec douceur!*' Nevertheless he scarcely ever went into her room. Lord Hervey states 'that he did, even in this moving situation, *snub* her for something or other she did or said. One morning, as she lay with her eyes fixed on a point in the air, as people sometimes do when they want to keep their thoughts from wandering, the king coarsely told her 'she looked like a calf which had just had its throat cut.' He expected her to die in state. Then, with all his bursts of tenderness he always mingled his own praises, hinting that though she was a good wife he knew he had deserved a good one, and remarking, when he extolled her understanding, that he did not 'think it the worse for her having kept him company so many years.' To all this Lord Hervey listened with, doubtless, well-concealed disgust; for cabals were even then forming for the future influence that might or might not be obtained.

The queen's life, meantime, was softly ebbing away in this atmosphere of selfishness, brutality, and unbelief. One evening she asked Dr. Tessier impatiently how long her state might continue?

'Your Majesty,' was the reply, 'will soon be released.'

'So much the better,' the queen calmly answered.

At ten o'clock that night, whilst the king lay at the foot of her bed, on the floor, and the Princess Emily on a couch-bed in the room, the fearful death-rattle in the throat was heard. Mrs. Purcel, her chief and old attendant, gave the alarm: the Princess Caroline and Lord Hervey were sent for; but the princess was too late, her mother had expired before she arrived. All the dying queen said was, 'I have now got an asthma; open the window:' then she added, '*Pray!*' That was her last word. As the Princess Emily began to read some prayers, the sufferer breathed her last sigh. The Princess Caroline held a looking-glass to her lips, and finding there was no damp on it, said, ''Tis over!' Yet

she shed not one tear upon the arrival of that event, the prospect of which had cost her so many heartrending sobs.

The king kissed the lifeless face and hands of his often-injured wife, and then retired to his own apartment, ordering that a page should sit up with him for that and several other nights, for his Majesty was afraid of apparitions, and feared to be left alone. He caused himself, however, to be buried by the side of his queen, in Henry VII.'s chapel, and ordered that one side of his coffin and of hers should be withdrawn; and in that state the two coffins were discovered not many years ago.

With the death of Queen Caroline, Lord Hervey's life, as to court, was changed. He was afterwards made lord privy seal, and had consequently to enter the political world, with the disadvantage of knowing that much was expected from a man of so high a reputation for wit and learning. He was violently opposed by Pelham, Duke of Newcastle, who had been adverse to his entering the ministry; and since, with Walpole's favour, it was impossible to injure him by fair means, it was resolved to oppose Lord Hervey by foul ones. One evening, when he was to speak, a party of fashionable Amazons, with two duchesses—her grace of Queensberry and her grace of Ancaster—at their head, stormed the House of Lords and disturbed the debate with noisy laughter and sneers Poor Lord Hervey was completely daunted, and spoke miserably. After Sir Robert Walpole's fall Lord Hervey retired. The following letter from him to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu fully describes his position and circumstances:—

'I must now,' he writes to her, 'since you take so friendly a part in what concerns me, give you a short account of my natural and political health; and when I say I am still alive, and still privy seal, it is all I can say for the pleasure of one or the honour of the other; for since Lord Orford's retiring, as I am too proud to offer my service and friendship

where I am not sure they will be accepted of, and too inconsiderable to have those advances made to me (though I never forgot or failed to return any obligation I ever received), so I remain as illustrious a nothing in this office as ever filled it since it was erected. There is one benefit, however, I enjoy from this loss of my court interest, which is, that all those flies which were buzzing about me in the summer sunshine and full ripeness of that interest, have all deserted its autumnal decay, and from thinking my natural death not far off, and my political demise already over, have all forgot the death-bed of the one and the coffin of the other.'

Again he wrote to her a characteristic letter :—

'I have been confined these three weeks by a fever, which is a sort of annual tax my detestable constitution pays to our detestable climate at the return of every spring; it is now much abated, though not quite gone off.'

He was long a helpless invalid; and on the 8th of August, 1743, his short, unprofitable, brilliant, unhappy life was closed. He died at Ickworth, attended and deplored by his wife, who had ever held a secondary part in the heart of the great wit and beau of the court of George II. After his death his son George returned to Lady Mary all the letters she had written to his father: the packet was sealed; an assurance was at the same time given that they had not been read. In acknowledging this act of attention, Lady Mary wrote that she could almost regret that he had not glanced his eye over a correspondence which might have shown him what so young a man might perhaps be inclined to doubt—the possibility of a long and steady friendship subsisting between two persons of different sexes without the least mixture of love.'

Nevertheless, some expressions of Lord Hervey's seem to have bordered on the tender style, when writing to Lady Mary in such terms as these. She had complained that she

was too old to inspire a passion (a sort of challenge for a compliment), on which he wrote: 'I should think anybody a great fool that said he liked spring better than summer, merely because it is further from autumn, or that they loved green fruit better than ripe only because it was further from being rotten. I ever did, and believe ever shall, like woman best—

> "Just in the noon of life—those golden days,
> When the mind ripens ere the form decays."'

Certainly this looks very unlike a pure Platonic, and it is not to be wondered at that Lady Hervey refused to call on Lady Mary, when, long after Lord Hervey's death, that fascinating woman returned to England. A wit, a courtier at the very fount of all politeness, Lord Hervey wanted the genuine source of all social qualities—Christianity. That moral refrigerator which checks the kindly current of neighbourly kindness, and which prevents all genial feeling from expanding, produced its usual effect—misanthropy. Lord Hervey's lines, in his 'Satire after the manner of Persius,' describe too well his own mental canker:—

> 'Mankind I know, their motives and their art,
> Their vice their own, their virtue best apart,
> Till played so oft, that all the cheat can tell,
> And dangerous only when 'tis acted well.'

Lord Hervey left in the possession of his family a manuscript work, consisting of memoirs of his own time, written in his own autograph, which was clean and legible. This work, which has furnished many of the anecdotes connected with his court life in the foregoing pages, was long guarded from the eye of any but the Hervey family, owing to an injunction given in his will by Augustus, third Earl of Bristol, Lord Hervey's son, that it should not see the light until after the death of His Majesty George III. It was not therefore published until 1848, when they were edited by Mr. Croker.

They are referred to both by Horace Walpole, who had heard of them, if he had not seen them, and by Lord Hailes, as affording the most intimate portraiture of a court that has ever been presented to the English people. Such a delineation as Lord Hervey has left ought to cause a sentiment of thankfulness in every British heart for not being exposed to such influences, to such examples as he gives, in the present day, when goodness, affection, purity, benevolence, are the household deities of the court of our beloved, inestimable Queen Victoria.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, FOURTH EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, FOURTH EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

THE subject of this memoir may be thought by some rather the modeller of wits than the original of that class; the great critic and judge of manners rather than the delight of the dinner-table: but we are told to the contrary by one who loved him not. Lord Hervey says of Lord Chesterfield that he was 'allowed by everybody to have more conversable entertaining table-wit than any man of his time; his propensity to ridicule, in which he indulged himself with infinite humour and no distinction; and his inexhaustible spirits, and no discretion; made him sought and feared—liked and not loved—by most of his acquaintance.'

This formidable personage was born in London on the 2nd day of September, 1694. It was remarkable that the father of a man so vivacious, should have been of a morose temper; all the wit and spirit of intrigue displayed by him remind us of the frail Lady Chesterfield, in the time of Charles II.*—that lady who was looked on as a martyr because her husband was jealous of her: 'a prodigy,' says

* The Countess of Chesterfield here alluded to was the second wife of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield. Philip Dormer, fourth Earl, was grandson of the second Earl, by his third wife.

De Grammont, 'in the city of London,' where indulgent critics endeavoured to excuse his lordship on account of his bad education, and mothers vowed that none of their sons should ever set foot in Italy, lest they should 'bring back with them that infamous custom of laying restraint on their wives.'

Even Horace Walpole cites Chesterfield as the 'witty earl:' apropos to an anecdote which he relates of an Italian lady, who said that she was only four-and-twenty; 'I suppose,' said Lord Chesterfield, 'she means four-and-twenty stone.'

By his father the future wit, historian, and orator was utterly neglected; but his grandmother, the Marchioness of Halifax, supplied to him the place of both parents, his mother —her daughter, Lady Elizabeth Saville—having died in his childhood. At the age of eighteen, Chesterfield, then Lord Stanhope, was entered at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. It was one of the features of his character to fall at once into the tone of the society into which he happened to be thrown. One can hardly imagine his being 'an absolute pedant,' but such was, actually, his own account of himself:—'When I talked my best I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not even without thoughts of wearing the toga virilis of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns.'

Thus, again, when in Paris, he caught the manners, as he had acquired the language, of the Parisians. 'I shall not give you my opinion of the French, because I am very often taken for one of them, and several have paid me the highest compliment they think it in their power to bestow—which is, "Sir, you are just like ourselves." I shall only

tell you that I am insolent; I talk a great deal; I am very loud and peremptory; I sing and dance as I walk along; and, above all, I spend an immense sum in hair-powder, feathers, and white gloves.'

Although he entered Parliament before he had attained the legal age, and was expected to make a great figure in that assembly, Lord Chesterfield preferred the reputation of a wit and a beau to any other distinction. 'Call it vanity, if you will,' he wrote in after-life to his son, 'and possibly it was so; but my great object was to make every man and every woman love me. I often succeeded; but why? by taking great pains.'

According to Lord Hervey's account he often even sacrificed his interest to his vanity. The description given of Lord Chesterfield by one as bitter as himself implies, indeed, that great pains were requisite to counterbalance the defects of nature. Wilkes, one of the ugliest men of his time, used to say, that with an hour's start he would carry off the affections of any woman from the handsomest man breathing. Lord Chesterfield, according to Lord Hervey, required to be still longer in advance of a rival.

'With a person,' Hervey writes, 'as disagreeable as it was possible for a human figure to be without being deformed, he affected following many women of the first beauty and the most in fashion. He was very short, disproportioned, thick, and clumsily made; had a broad, rough-featured, ugly face, with black teeth, and a head big enough for a Polyphemus. One Ben Ashurst, who said a few good things, though admired for many, told Lord Chesterfield once, that he was like a stunted giant—which was a humorous idea and really apposite.'

Notwithstanding that Chesterfield, when young, injured both soul and body by pleasure and dissipation, he always found time for serious study: when he could not have it otherwise, he took it out of his sleep. How late soever he went

to bed, he resolved always to rise early; and this resolution he adhered to so faithfully, that at the age of fifty-eight he could declare that for more than forty years he had never been in bed at nine o'clock in the morning, but had generally been up before eight. He had the good sense, in this respect, not to exaggerate even this homely virtue. He did not rise with the dawn, as many early risers pride themselves in doing, putting all the engagements of ordinary life out of their usual beat, just as if the clocks had been set two hours forward. The man who rises at four in this country, and goes to bed at nine, is a social and family nuisance.

Strong good sense characterized Chesterfield's early pursuits. Desultory reading he abhorred. He looked on it as one of the resources of age, but as injurious to the young in the extreme. 'Throw away,' thus he writes to his son, 'none of your time upon those trivial, futile books, published by idle necessitous authors for the amusement of idle and ignorant readers.'

Even in those days such books 'swarm and buzz about one:' 'flap them away,' says Chesterfield, 'they have no sting.' The earl directed the whole force of his mind to oratory, and became the finest speaker of his time. Writing to Sir Horace Mann, about the Hanoverian debate (in 1743, Dec. 15), Walpole praising the speeches of Lords Halifax and Sandwich, adds, 'I was there, and heard Lord Chesterfield make the finest oration I ever heard there.' This from a man who had listened to Pulteney, to Chatham, to Carteret, was a singularly valuable tribute.

Whilst a student at Cambridge, Chesterfield was forming an acquaintance with the Hon. George Berkeley, the youngest son of the second Earl of Berkeley, and remarkable rather as being the second husband of Lady Suffolk, the favourite of George II., than from any merits or demerits of his own.

This early intimacy probably brought Lord Chesterfield into the close friendship which afterwards subsisted between him and Lady Suffolk, to whom many of his letters are addressed.

His first public capacity was a diplomatic appointment: he afterwards attained to the rank of an ambassador, whose duty it is, according to a witticism of Sir Henry Wotton's, '*to lie* abroad for the good of his country;' and no man was in this respect more competent to fulfil these requirements than Chesterfield. Hating both wine and tobacco, he had smoked and drunk at Cambridge, 'to be in the fashion;' he gamed at the Hague, on the same principle; and, unhappily, gaming became a habit and a passion. Yet never did he indulge it when acting, afterwards, in a ministerial capacity. Neither when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or as Under-secretary of State, did he allow a gaming-table in his house. On the very night that he resigned office he went to *White's*.

The Hague was then a charming residence: among others who, from political motives, were living there, were John Duke of Marlborough and Queen Sarah, both of whom paid Chesterfield marked attention. Naturally industrious, with a ready insight into character—a perfect master in that art which bids us keep one's thoughts close, and our countenances open, Chesterfield was admirably fitted for diplomacy. A master of modern languages and of history, he soon began to like business. When in England, he had been accused of having 'a need of a certain proportion of talk in a day:' 'that,' he wrote to Lady Suffolk, 'is now changed into a need of such a proportion of writing in a day.'

In 1728 he was promoted: being sent as ambassador to the Hague, where he was popular, and where he believed his stay would be beneficial both to soul and body, there being 'fewer temptations, and fewer opportunities to sin,' as he wrote to Lady Suffolk, 'than in England.' Here his days passed, he asserted, in doing the king's business very ill—and

his own still worse:—sitting down daily to dinner with fourteen or fifteen people; whilst at five the pleasures of the evening began with a lounge on the Voorhoot, a public walk planted by Charles V.:—then, either a very bad French play, or a 'reprise quadrille,' with three ladies, the youngest of them fifty, and the chance of losing, perhaps, three florins (besides one's time)—lasted till ten o'clock; at which time 'His Excellency' went home, 'reflecting with satisfaction on the innocent amusements of a well-spent day, that left nothing behind them,' and retired to bed at eleven, 'with the testimony of a good conscience.'

All, however, of Chesterfield's time was not passed in this serene dissipation. He began to compose 'The History of the Reign of George II.' at this period. About only half a dozen characters were written. The intention was not confined to Chesterfield: Carteret and Bolingbroke entertained a similar design, which was completed by neither. When the subject was broached before George II., he thus expressed himself: and his remarks are the more amusing as they were addressed to Lord Hervey, who was, at that very moment, making his notes for that bitter chronicle of his majesty's reign, which has been ushered into the world by the late Wilson Croker,—'They will all three,' said King George II., 'have about as much truth in them as the *Mille et Une Nuits*. Not but I shall like to read Bolingbroke's, who of all those rascals and knaves that have been lying against me these ten years has certainly the best parts, and the most knowledge. He is a scoundrel, but he is a scoundrel of a higher class than Chesterfield. Chesterfield is a little, tea-table scoundrel, that tells little womanish lies to make quarrels in families; and tries to make women lose their reputations, and make their husbands beat them, without any object but to give himself airs; as if anybody could believe a woman could like a dwarf baboon.'

Lord Hervey gave the preference to Bolingbroke: stating as his reason, that 'though Lord Bolingbroke had no idea of

wit, his satire was keener than any one's. Lord Chesterfield, on the other hand, would have a great deal of wit in them; but, in every page you would see he intended to be witty: every paragraph would be an epigram. *Polish*, he declared, would be his bane;' and Lord Hervey was perfectly right.

In 1732 Lord Chesterfield was obliged to retire from his embassy on the plea of ill-health, but probably, from some political cause. He was in the opposition against Sir Robert Walpole in the Excise Bill; and felt the displeasure of that all-powerful minister by being dismissed from his office of High Steward.

Being badly received at court, he now lived in the country; sometimes at Buxton, where his father drank the waters, where he had his recreations, when not persecuted by two young brothers, Sir William Stanhope and John Stanhope, one of whom performed 'tolerably ill upon a broken hautboy, and the other something worse upon a cracked flute.' There he won three half-crowns from the curate of the place, and a shilling from 'Gaffer Foxeley' at a cock-match. Sometimes he sought relaxation in Scarborough, where fashionable beaux 'danced with the pretty ladies all night,' and hundreds of Yorkshire country bumpkins 'played the inferior parts; and, as it were, only tumble, whilst the others dance upon the high ropes of gallantry.' Scarborough was full of Jacobites: the popular feeling was then all rife against Sir Robert Walpole's excise scheme. Lord Chesterfield thus wittily satirized that famous measure:—

'The people of this town are, at present, in great consternation upon a report they have heard from London, which, if true, they think will ruin them. They are informed, that considering the vast consumption of these waters, there is a design laid of *excising* them next session; and, moreover, that as bathing in the sea is become the general practice of both sexes, and as the kings of England have always been allowed to be masters of the seas, every person so bath-

ing shall be gauged, and pay so much per foot square, as their cubical bulk amounts to.'

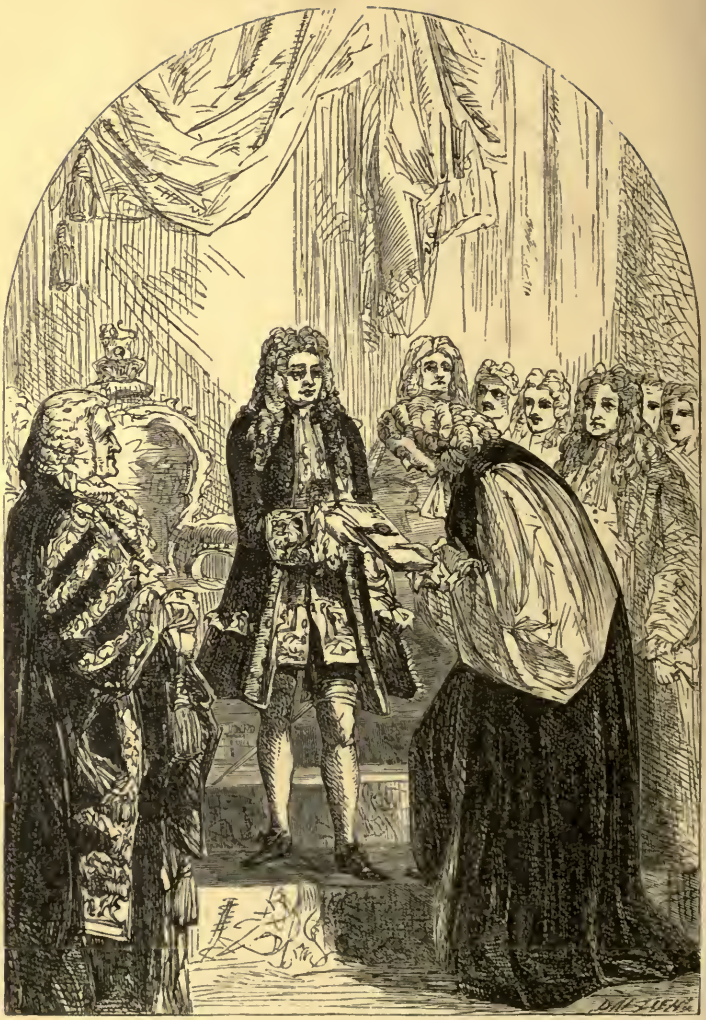
In 1733, Lord Chesterfield married Melusina, the supposed niece, but, in fact, the daughter of the Duchess of Kendal, the mistress of George I. This lady was presumed to be a great heiress, from the dominion which her mother had over the king. Melusina had been created (for life) Baroness of Aldborough, county Suffolk, and Countess of Walsingham, county Norfolk, nine years previous to her marriage.

Her father being George I., as Horace Walpole terms him, 'rather a good sort of man than a shining king,' and her mother 'being no genius,' there was probably no great attraction about Lady Walsingham, except her expected dowry.

During her girlhood Melusina resided in the apartments at St. James's — opening into the garden; and here Horace Walpole describes his seeing George I., in the rooms appropriated to the Duchess of Kendal, next to those of Melusina Schulemberg, or, as she was then called, the Countess of Walsingham. The Duchess of Kendal was then very 'lean and ill-favoured.' 'Just before her,' says Horace, 'stood a tall, elderly man, rather pale, of an aspect rather good-natured than august: in a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all. That was George I.'

The Duchess of Kendal had been maid of honour to the Electress Sophia, the mother of George I. and the daughter of Elizabeth of Bohemia. The duchess was always frightful; so much so that one night the electress, who had acquired a little English, said to Mrs. Howard, afterwards Lady Suffolk, —glancing at Mademoiselle Schulemberg — 'Look at that *mawkin*, and think of her being my son's passion!'

The duchess, however, like all the Hanoverians, knew how to profit by royal preference. She took bribes:—she had a settlement of 3,000*l.* a year. But her daughter was eventu-



A Royal Robber. Vol. I., p. 267.

ally disappointed of the expected bequest from her father, the king.*

In the apartments at St. James's Lord Chesterfield for some time lived, when he was not engaged in office abroad; and there he dissipated large sums in play. It was here, too, that Queen Caroline, the wife of George II., detected the intimacy that existed between Chesterfield and Lady Suffolk. There was an obscure window in Queen Caroline's apartments, which looked into a dark passage, lighted only by a single lamp at night. One Twelfth Night Lord Chesterfield, having won a large sum at cards, deposited it with Lady Suffolk, thinking it not safe to carry it home at night. He was watched, and his intimacy with the mistress of George II. thereupon inferred. Thenceforth he could obtain no court influence; and, in desperation, he went into the opposition.

On the death of George I., a singular scene, with which Lord Chesterfield's interests were connected, occurred in the Privy Council. Dr. Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, produced the king's will, and delivered it to his successor, expecting that it would be opened and read in the council; what was his consternation, when his Majesty, without saying a word, put it into his pocket, and stalked out of the room with real German imperturbability! Neither the astounded prelate nor the subservient council ventured to utter a word. The will was never more heard of: rumour declared that it was burnt. The contents, of course, never transpired; and the legacy of 40,000*l.*, said to have been left to the Duchess of Kendal, was never more spoken of, until Lord Chester-

* In the 'Annual Register,' for 1774, p. 20, it is stated that as George I. had left Lady Walsingham a legacy which his successor did not think proper to deliver, the Earl of Chesterfield was determined to recover it by a suit in Chancery, had not his Majesty, on questioning the Lord Chancellor on the subject, and being answered that he could give no opinion extrajudicially, thought proper to fulfil the bequest.

field, in 1733, married the Countess of Walsingham. In 1743, it is said, he claimed the legacy—in right of his wife—the Duchess of Kendal being then dead: and was 'quieted' with 20,000*l.*, and got, as Horace Walpole observes, nothing from the duchess—'except his wife.'

The only excuse that was urged to extenuate this act, on the part of George II., was that his royal father had burned two wills which had been made in his favour. These were supposed to be the wills of the Duke and Duchess of Zell and of the Electress Sophia. There was not even common honesty in the house of Hanover at that period.

Disappointed in his wife's fortune, Lord Chesterfield seems to have cared very little for the disappointed heiress. Their union was childless. His opinion of marriage appears very much to have coincided with that of the world of malcontents who rush, in the present day, to the court of Judge Cresswell, with 'dissolving views.' On one occasion, he writes thus: 'I have at last done the best office that can be done to most married people; that is, I have fixed the separation between my brother and his wife, and the definitive treaty of peace will be proclaimed in about a fortnight.'

Horace Walpole related the following anecdote of Sir William Stanhope (Chesterfield's brother) and his lady, whom he calls 'a fond couple.' After their return from Paris, when they arrived at Lord Chesterfield's house at Blackheath, Sir William, who had, like his brother, a cutting, polite wit, that was probably expressed with the 'allowed simper' of Lord Chesterfield, got out of the chaise and said, with a low bow, 'Madame, I hope I shall never see your face again.' She replied, 'Sir, I will take care that you never shall;' and so they parted.

There was little probability of Lord Chesterfield's participating in domestic felicity, when neither his heart nor his fancy were engaged in the union which he had formed. The lady to whom he was really attached, and by whom he had a son, resided in the Netherlands: she passed by the name of

Madame du Bouchet, and survived both Lord Chesterfield and her son. A permanent provision was made for her, and a sum of five hundred pounds bequeathed to her, with these words: 'as a small reparation for the injury I did her.' 'Certainly,' adds Lord Mahon, in his Memoir of his illustrious ancestor, 'a small one.'

For some time Lord Chesterfield remained in England, and his letters are dated from Bath, from Tonbridge, from Blackheath. He had, in 1726, been elevated to the House of Lords upon the death of his father. In that assembly his great eloquence is thus well described by his biographer:—*

'Lord Chesterfield's eloquence, the fruit of much study, was less characterized by force and compass than by elegance and perspicuity, and especially by good taste and urbanity, and a vein of delicate irony which, while it sometimes inflicted severe strokes, never passed the limits of decency and propriety. It was that of a man who, in the union of wit and good sense with politeness, had not a competitor. These qualities were matured by the advantage which he assiduously sought and obtained, of a familiar acquaintance with almost all the eminent wits and writers of his time, many of whom had been the ornaments of a preceding age of literature, while others were destined to become those of a later period.'

The accession of George II., to whose court Lord Chesterfield had been attached for many years, brought him no political preferment. The court had, however, its attractions, even for one who owed his polish to the belles of Paris, and who was almost always, in taste and manners, more foreign than English. Henrietta, Lady Pomfret, the daughter and heiress of John, Lord Jeffreys, the son of Judge Jeffreys, was at that time the leader of fashion.

Six daughters, one of them, Lady Sophia, surpassingly lovely, recalled the perfections of that ancestress, Arabella

* Lord Mahon, now Earl of Stanhope, if not the most eloquent, one of the most honest historians of our time.

Fermor, whose charms Pope has so exquisitely touched in the 'Rape of the Lock.' Lady Sophia became eventually the wife of Lord Carteret, the minister, whose talents and the charms of whose eloquence constituted him a sort of rival to Chesterfield. With all his abilities, Lord Chesterfield may be said to have failed both as a courtier and as a political character, as far as permanent influence in any ministry was concerned, until in 1744, when what was called the 'Broad-bottomed administration' was formed, when he was admitted into the cabinet. In the following year, however, he went, for the last time, to Holland, as ambassador, and succeeded beyond the expectations of his party in the purposes of his embassy. He took leave of the States-General just before the battle of Fontenoy, and hastened to Ireland, where he had been nominated Lord-Lieutenant previous to his journey to Holland. He remained in that country only a year; but long enough to prove how liberal were his views—how kindly the dispositions of his heart.

Only a few years before Lord Chesterfield's arrival in Dublin, the Duke of Shrewsbury had given as a reason for accepting the vice-regency of that country, (of which King James I. had said, there was 'more ado' than with any of his dominions,) 'that it was a place where a man had business enough to keep him from falling asleep, and not enough to keep him awake.'

Chesterfield, however, was not of that opinion. He did more in one year than the duke would have accomplished in five. He began by instituting a principle of impartial justice. Formerly, Protestants had alone been employed as 'managers;' the Lieutenant was to see with Protestant eyes, to hear with Protestant ears.

'I have determined to proscribe no set of persons whatever,' says Chesterfield, 'and determined to be governed by none. Had the Papists made any attempt to put themselves above the law, I should have taken good care to have quelled

them again. It was said my lenity to the Papists had wrought no alteration either in their religious or their political sentiments. I did not expect that it would; but surely that was no reason for cruelty towards them.'

Often by a timely jest Chesterfield conveyed a hint, or even shrouded a reproof. One of the ultra-zealous informed him that his coachman was a Papist, and went every Sunday to mass. 'Does he indeed? I will take care he never drives me there,' was Chesterfield's cool reply.

It was at this critical period, when the Hanoverian dynasty was shaken almost to its downfall by the insurrection in Scotland of 1745, that Ireland was imperilled: 'With a weak or wavering, or a fierce and headlong Lord-Lieutenant—with a Grafton or a Strafford,' remarks Lord Mahon, 'there would soon have been a simultaneous rising in the Emerald Isle.' But Chesterfield's energy, his lenity, his wise and just administration saved the Irish from being excited into rebellion by the emissaries of Charles Edward, or slaughtered, when conquered, by the 'Butcher,' and his tiger-like dragoons. When all was over, and that sad page of history in which the deaths of so many faithful adherents of the exiled family are recorded, had been held up to the gaze of bleeding Caledonia, Chesterfield recommended mild measures, and advised the establishment of schools in the Highlands; but the age was too narrow-minded to adopt his views. In January, 1748, Chesterfield retired from public life. 'Could I do any good,' he wrote to a friend, 'I would sacrifice some more quiet to it; but convinced as I am that I can do none, I will indulge my ease, and preserve my character. I have gone through pleasures while my constitution and my spirits would allow me. Business succeeded them; and I have now gone through every part of it without liking it at all the better for being acquainted with it. Like many other things, it is most admired by those who know it least. . . . I have been behind the scenes both of pleasure and business; I have seen all the coarse

pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move all the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant multitude. . . . My horse, my books, and my friends will divide my time pretty equally.'

He still interested himself in what was useful; and carried a Bill in the House of Lords for the Reformation of the Calendar, in 1751. It seems a small matter for so great a mind as his to accomplish, but it was an achievement of infinite difficulty. Many statesmen had shrunk from the undertaking; and even Chesterfield found it essential to prepare the public, by writing in some periodical papers on the subject. Nevertheless the vulgar outcry was vehement: 'Give us back the eleven days we have been robbed of!' cried the mob at a general election. When Bradley was dying, the common people ascribed his sufferings to a judgment for the part he had taken in that 'impious transaction,' the alteration of the calendar. But they were not less *bornés* in their notions than the Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister. Upon Lord Chesterfield giving him notice of his Bill, that bustling premier, who had been in a hurry for forty years, who never 'walked but always ran,' greatly alarmed, begged Chesterfield not to stir matters that had been long quiet; adding, that he did not like 'new-fangled things.' He was, as we have seen, overruled, and henceforth the New Style was adopted; and no special calamity has fallen on the nation, as was expected, in consequence. Nevertheless, after Chesterfield had made his speech in the House of Lords, and when every one had complimented him on the clearness of his explanation—'God knows,' he wrote to his son, 'I had not even attempted to explain the Bill to them; I might as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonic to them, as astronomy. They would have understood it full as well.' So much for the 'Lords' in those days!

After his *furore* for politics had subsided, Chesterfield returned to his ancient passion for play. We must linger a little

over the still brilliant period of his middle life, whilst his hearing was spared; whilst his wit remained, and the charming manners on which he had formed a science, continued; and before we see him in the mournful decline of a life wholly given to the world.

He had now established himself in Chesterfield House. Hitherto his progenitors had been satisfied with Bloomsbury Square, in which the Lord Chesterfield mentioned by De Grammont resided; but the accomplished Chesterfield chose a site near Audley Street, which had been built on what was called Mr. Audley's land, lying between Great Brook Field and the 'Shoulder of Mutton Field.' And near this locality with the elegant name, Chesterfield chose his spot, for which he had to wrangle and fight with the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, who asked an exorbitant sum for the ground. Isaac Ware, the editor of 'Palladio,' was the architect to whom the erection of this handsome residence was intrusted. Happily it is still untouched by any *renovating* hand. Chesterfield's favourite apartments, looking on the most spacious private garden in London, are just as they were in his time; one especially, which he termed the 'finest room in London,' was furnished and decorated by him. 'The walls,' says a writer in the 'Quarterly Review,' 'are covered half way up with rich and classical stores of literature; above the cases are in close series the portraits of eminent authors, French and English, with most of whom he had conversed; over these, and immediately under the massive cornice, extend all round in foot-long capitals the Horatian lines:—

'Nunc . veterum . libris . Nunc . somno . et . inertibus . Horis.
Lucen . solicter . jucunda . oblivia . vitea.

'On the mantel-pieces and cabinets stand busts of old orators, interspersed with voluptuous vases and bronzes, antique or Italian, and airy statuettes in marble or alabaster of nude or semi-nude opera nymphs.'

What Chesterfield called the 'cannonical pillars' of the

house were columns brought from Cannons, near Edgeware, the seat of the Duke of Chandos. The antechamber of Chesterfield House has been erroneously stated as the room in which Johnson waited the great lord's pleasure. That state of endurance was probably passed by 'Old Samuel' in Bloomsbury.

In this stately abode—one of the few, the very few, that seem to hold *noblesse* apart in our levelling metropolis—Chesterfield held his assemblies of all that London, or indeed England, Paris, the Hague, or Vienna, could furnish of what was polite and charming. Those were days when the stream of society did not, as now, flow freely, mingling with the grace of aristocracy the acquirements of hard-working professors: there was then a strong line of demarcation; it had not been broken down in the same way as now, when people of rank and wealth live in rows, instead of inhabiting hotels set apart. Paris has sustained a similar revolution, since her gardens were built over, and their green shades, delicious, in the centre of that hot city, are seen no more. In the very Faubourg St. Germain, the grand old hotels are rapidly disappearing, and with them something of the exclusiveness of the higher orders. Lord Chesterfield, however, triumphantly pointing to the fruits of his taste, and distribution of his wealth, witnessed in his library at Chesterfield House, the events which time produced. He heard of the death of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and of her bequest to him of twenty thousand pounds, and her best and largest brilliant diamond ring, 'out of the great regard she had for his merit, and the infinite obligations she had received from him.' He witnessed the change of society and of politics which occurred when George II. expired, and the Earl of Bute, calling himself a descendant of the house of Stuart, 'and humble enough to be proud of it,' having quitted the Isle of Bute, which Lord Chesterfield calls 'but a little south of Nova Zembla,' took possession, not only of the affections, but even of the

senses of the young king, George III., who, assisted by the widowed Princess of Wales (supposed to be attached to Lord Bute), was 'lugged out of the seraglio,' and 'placed upon the throne.'

Chesterfield lived to have the honour of having the plan of 'Johnson's Dictionary' inscribed to him, and the dishonour of neglecting the great author. Johnson, indeed, denied the truth of the story which gained general belief, in which it was asserted that he had taken a disgust at being kept waiting in the earl's antechamber, the reason being assigned that his lordship 'had company with him;' when at last the door opened, and forth came Colley Cibber. Then Johnson—so report said—indignant, not only for having been kept waiting, but also for *whom*, went away, it was affirmed, in disgust; but this was solemnly denied by the doctor, who assured Boswell that his wrath proceeded from continual neglect on the part of Chesterfield.

Whilst the Dictionary was in progress, Chesterfield seemed to forget the existence of him, whom, together with other literary men, he affected to patronize.

He once sent him ten pounds, after which he forgot Johnson's address, and said 'the great author had changed his lodgings.' People who really wish to benefit others can always discover where they lodge. The days of patronage were then expiring, but they had not quite ceased, and a dedication was always to be in some way paid for.

When the publication of the Dictionary drew near, Lord Chesterfield flattered himself that, in spite of all his neglect, the great compliment of having so vast an undertaking dedicated to him would still be paid, and wrote some papers in the 'World,' recommending the work, more especially referring to the 'plan,' and terming Johnson the 'dictator,' in respect to language: 'I will not only obey him,' he said, 'as my dictator, like an old Roman, but like a modern Roman, will implicitly believe in him as my pope.'

Johnson, however, was not to be propitiated by those 'honeyed words.' He wrote a letter couched in what he called 'civil terms,' to Chesterfield, from which we extract the following passages:—

'When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

'Seven years, my lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward room, or was repulsed from your door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour: such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. . . . Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man who is struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the publick should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.'

The conduct of Johnson, on this occasion, was approved by

most manly minds, except that of his publisher, Mr. Robert Dodsley; Dr. Adams, a friend of Dodsley, said he was sorry that Johnson had written that celebrated letter (a very model of polite contempt). Dodsley said he was sorry too, for he had a property in the Dictionary, to which his lordship's patronage might be useful. He then said that Lord Chesterfield had shown him the letter. 'I should have thought,' said Adams, 'that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it.' 'Pooh!' cried Dodsley, 'do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? not at all, sir. It lay on his table where any one might see it. He read it to me; said, "this man has great powers," pointed out the severest passages, and said, "how well they were expressed."' The art of dissimulation, in which Chesterfield was perfect, imposed on Mr. Dodsley.

Dr. Adams expostulated with the doctor, and said Lord Chesterfield declared he would part with the best servant he had, if he had known that he had turned away a man who was '*always* welcome.' Then Adams insisted on Lord Chesterfield's affability, and easiness of access to literary men. But the sturdy Johnson replied, 'Sir, that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man existing.' 'I think,' Adams rejoined, 'I know one that is prouder; you, by your own account, are the prouder of the two.' 'But mine,' Johnson answered, with one of his happy turns, 'was *defensive* pride.' 'This man,' he afterwards said, referring to Chesterfield, 'I thought had been a lord among wits, but I find he is only a wit among lords.'

In revenge, Chesterfield in his Letters depicted Johnson, it is said, in the character of the 'respectable Hottentot.' Amongst other things he observed of the Hottentot, 'he throws his meat anywhere but down his throat.' This being remarked to Johnson, who was by no means pleased at being immortalized as the Hottentot—'Sir,' he answered, 'Lord Chesterfield never saw me eat in his life.'

Such are the leading points of this famous and lasting controversy. It is amusing to know that Lord Chesterfield was not always precise as to directions to his letters. He once directed to Lord Pembroke, who was always swimming, 'To the Earl of Pembroke, in the Thames, over against Whitehall.' This, as Horace Walpole remarks, 'was sure of finding him within a certain fathom.'

Lord Chesterfield was now admitted to be the very 'glass of fashion,' though age, and, according to Lord Hervey, a hideous person, impeded his being the 'mould of form.' 'I don't know why,' writes Horace Walpole, in the dog-days, from Strawberry Hill, 'but people are always more anxious about their hay than their corn, or twenty other things that cost them more: I suppose my Lord Chesterfield, or some such dictator, made it fashionable to care about one's hay. Nobody betrays solicitude about getting in his rents.' 'The prince of wits,' as the same authority calls him—'his entrance into the world was announced by his *bon-mots*, and his closing lips dropped repartees that sparkled with his juvenile fire.'

No one, it was generally allowed, had such a force of table-wit as Lord Chesterfield; but while the 'Graces' were ever his theme, he indulged himself without distinction or consideration in numerous sallies. He was, therefore, at once sought and feared; liked but not loved; neither sex, nor relationship, nor rank, nor friendship, nor obligation, nor profession, could shield his victim from what Lord Hervey calls, 'those pointed, glittering weapons, that seemed to shine only to a stander-by, but cut deep into those they touched.'

He cherished 'a voracious appetite for abuse;' fell upon every one that came in his way, and thus treated each one of his companions at the expense of the other. To him Hervey, who had probably often smarted, applied the lines of Boileau—

> 'Mais c'est un petit fou qui se croit tout permis,
> Et qui pour un bon mot va perdre vingt amis.'

Horace Walpole (a more lenient judge of Chesterfield's merits) observes that 'Chesterfield took no less pains to be the phœnix of fine gentlemen, than Tully did to qualify himself as an orator. Both succeeded: Tully immortalized his name; Chesterfield's reign lasted a little longer than that of a fashionable beauty.' It was, perhaps, because, as Dr. Johnson said, all Lord Chesterfield's witty sayings were puns, that even this brilliant wit failed to please, although it amused, and surprised its hearers.

Notwithstanding the contemptuous description of Lord Chesterfield's personal appearance by Lord Hervey, his portraits represent a handsome, though hard countenance, well-marked features, and his figure and air appear to have been elegant. With his commanding talents, his wonderful brilliancy and fluency of conversation, he would perhaps sometimes have been even tedious, had it not been for his invariable cheerfulness. He was always, as Lord Hervey says, 'present' in his company. Amongst the few friends who really loved this thorough man of the world, was Lord Scarborough, yet no two characters were more opposite. Lord Scarborough had judgment, without wit: Chesterfield wit, and no judgment; Lord Scarborough had honesty, and principle; Lord Chesterfield had neither. Everybody liked the one, but did not care for his company. Every one disliked the other, but wished for his company. The fact was, Scarborough was 'splendid and absent.' Chesterfield, 'cheerful and present:' wit, grace, attention to what is passing, the surface, as it were, of a highly-cultured mind, produced a fascination that all the honour and respectability in the court of George II. could not compete with.

In the earlier part of Chesterfield's career, Pope, Bolingbroke, Hervey, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and, in fact, all that could add to the pleasures of the then early dinner-table, illumined Chesterfield House by their wit and gaiety. Yet in the midst of this exciting life, Lord Chesterfield found

time to devote to the improvement of his natural son; Philip Stanhope, a great portion of his leisure. His celebrated Letters to that son did not, however, appear during the earl's life; nor were they in any way the source of his popularity as a wit, which was due to his merits in that line alone.

The youth to whom these letters, so useful, and yet so objectionable, were addressed, was intended for a diplomatist. He was the very reverse of his father: learned, sensible, and dry; but utterly wanting in the graces, and devoid of eloquence. As an orator, therefore, he failed; as a man of society, he must also have failed; and his death, in 1768, some years before that of his father, left that father desolate, and disappointed. Philip Stanhope had attained the rank of envoy to Dresden, where he expired.

During the five years in which Chesterfield dragged out a mournful life after this event, he made the painful discovery that his son had married, without confiding that step to the father to whom he owed so much. This must have been almost as trying as the awkward, ungraceful deportment of him whom he mourned. The world now left Chesterfield ere he had left the world. He and his contemporary Lord Tyrawley were now old and infirm. 'The fact is,' Chesterfield wittily said, 'Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, but we don't choose to have it known.'

'The Bath,' he wrote to his friend Dayrolles, 'did me more good than I thought anything could do me; but all that good does not amount to what builders call half-repairs, and only keeps up the shattered fabric a little longer than it would have stood without them; but take my word for it, it will stand but a very little while longer. I am now in my grand climacteric, and shall not complete it. Fontenelle's last words at a hundred and three were, *Je souffre d'être:* deaf and infirm as I am, I can with truth say the same thing at sixty-three. In my mind it is only the strength of our passions, and the weakness of our reason, that makes us so

fond of life; but when the former subside and give way to the latter, we grow weary of being, and willing to withdraw. I do not recommend this train of serious reflections to you, nor ought you to adopt them. . . . You have children to educate and provide for, you have all your senses, and can enjoy all the comforts both of domestic and social life. I am in every sense *isolé*, and have wound up all my bottoms; I may now walk off quietly, without missing nor being missed.'

The kindness of his nature, corrupted as it was by a life wholly worldly, and but little illumined in its course by religion, shone now in his care of his two grandsons, the offspring of his lost son, and of their mother, Eugenia Stanhope. To her he thus wrote:—

'The last time I had the pleasure of seeing you, I was so taken up in playing with the boys, that I forgot their more important affairs. How soon would you have them placed at school? When I know your pleasure as to that, I will send to Monsieur Perny, to prepare everything for their reception. In the mean time, I beg that you will equip them thoroughly with clothes, linen, &c., all good, but plain; and give me the amount, which I will pay; for I do not intend, from this time forwards, the two boys should cost you one shilling.'

He lived, latterly, much at Blackheath, in the house which, being built on Crown land, has finally become the Ranger's lodge; but which still sometimes goes by the name of Chesterfield House. Here he spent large sums, especially on pictures, and cultivated Cantelupe melons; and here, as he grew older, and became permanently afflicted with deafness, his chief companion was a useful friend, Solomon Dayrolles—one of those indebted hangers-on whom it was an almost invariable custom to find, at that period, in great houses—and perhaps too frequently in our own day.

Dayrolles, who was employed in the embassy under Lord Sandwich at the Hague, had always, to borrow Horace Walpole's ill-natured expression, 'been a led-captain to the

Dukes of Richmond and Grafton, used to be sent to auctions for them, and to walk in the parks with their daughters, and once went dry-nurse in Holland with them. He has belonged, too, a good deal to my Lord Chesterfied, to whom I believe he owes this new honour, "that of being minister at the Hague," as he had before made him black-rod in Ireland, and gave the ingenious reason, that he had a black face.' But the great 'dictator' in the empire of politeness was now in a slow but sure decline. Not long before his death he was visited by Monsieur Suard, a French gentleman, who was anxious to see '*l'homme le plus aimable, le plus poli et le plus spirituel des trois royaumes*,' but who found him fearfully altered; morose, from his deafness, yet still anxious to please. 'It is very sad,' he said with his usual politeness, 'to be deaf, when one would so much enjoy listening. I am not,' he added, 'so philosophic as my friend the President de Montesquieu, who says, "I know how to be blind, but I do not yet know how to be deaf."' 'We shortened our visit,' says M. Suard, 'lest we should fatigue the earl.' 'I do not detain you,' said Chesterfield, 'for I must go and rehearse my funeral.' It was thus that he styled his daily drive through the streets of London.

Lord Chesterfield's wonderful memory continued till his latest hour. As he lay, gasping in the last agonies of extreme debility, his friend, Mr. Dayrolles, called in to see him half an hour before he expired. The politeness which had become part of his very nature did not desert the dying earl. He managed to say, in a low voice to his valet, 'Give Dayrolles a chair.' This little trait greatly struck the famous Dr. Warren, who was at the bedside of this brilliant and wonderful man. He died on the 24th of March, 1773, in the 79th year of his age.

The preamble to a codicil (Feb. 11, 1773) contains the following striking sentences, written when the intellect was impressed with the solemnity of that solemn change which

comes alike to the unreflecting and to the heart-stricken holy believer :—

'I most humbly recommend my soul to the extensive mercy of that Eternal, Supreme, Intelligent Being who gave it me; most earnestly at the same time deprecating his justice. Satiated with the pompous follies of this life, of which I have had an uncommon share, I would have no posthumous ones displayed at my funeral, and therefore desire to be buried in the next burying-place to the place where I shall die, and limit the whole expense of my funeral to 100*l*.'

His body was interred, according to his wish, in the vault of the chapel in South Audley Street, but it was afterwards removed to the family burial-place in Shelford Church, Nottinghamshire.

In his will he left legacies to his servants.* 'I consider them,' he said, 'as unfortunate friends; my equals by nature, and my inferiors only in the difference of our fortunes.' There was something lofty in the mind that prompted that sentence.

His estates reverted to a distant kinsman, descended from a younger son of the first earl; and it is remarkable, on looking through the Peerage of Great Britain, to perceive how often this has been the case in a race remarkable for the absence of virtue. Interested marriages, vicious habits, perhaps account for the fact; but retributive justice, though it be presumptuous to trace its course, is everywhere.

He had so great a horror in his last days of gambling, that in bequeathing his possessions to his heir, as he expected, and godson, Philip Stanhope, he inserts this clause :—

'In case my said godson, Philip Stanhope, shall at any time hereinafter keep, or be concerned in keeping of, any race-horses, or pack of hounds, or reside one night at Newmarket, that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill-manners, during the course of the races there; or shall resort to the said races; or shall lose, in any one day, at any game or bet whatsoever, the sum of 500*l*., then, in any the cases aforesaid, it is my express will that he, my said godson, shall forfeit and pay, out of my estate, the sum of 5,000*l*. to and for the use of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.'

* Two years' wages were left to the servants.

When we say that Lord Chesterfield was a man who had *no friend*, we sum up his character in those few words. Just after his death, a small but distinguished party of men dined together at Topham Beauclerk's. There was Sir Joshua Reynolds; Sir William Jones, the orientalist; Bennet Langton; Steevens; Boswell; Johnson. The conversation turned on Garrick, who, Johnson said, had friends, but no friend. Then Boswell asked, what is a friend? One who comforts and supports you, while others do not. 'Friendship, you know, sir, is the cordial drop to make the nauseous draught of life go down.' Then one of the company mentioned Lord Chesterfield as one who had no friend; and Boswell said: 'Garrick was pure gold, but beat out to thin leaf, Lord Chesterfield was tinsel.' And, for once, Johnson did not contradict him. But not so do we judge Lord Chesterfield. He was a man who acted on false principles through life; and those principles gradually undermined everything that was noble and generous in character; just as those deep underground currents, noiseless in their course, work through fine-grained rock, and produce a chasm. Everything with Chesterfield was self: for self, and for self alone, were agreeable qualities to be assumed; for self, was the country to be served, because that country protects and serves us; for self, were friends to be sought and cherished, as useful auxiliaries, or pleasant accessories: in the very core of the cankered heart, that advocated this corrupting doctrine of expediency, lay unbelief; that worm which never died in the hearts of so many illustrious men of that period—the refrigerator of the feelings.

One only gentle and genuine sentiment possessed Lord Chesterfield, and that was his love for his son. Yet in this affection the worldly man might be seen in mournful colours. He did not seek to render his son good; his sole desire was to see him successful: every lesson that he taught him, in those matchless Letters which have carried down

Chesterfield's fame to us when his other productions have virtually expired, exposes a code of dissimulation which Philip Stanhope, in his marriage, turned upon the father to whom he owed so much care and advancement. These Letters are, in fact, a complete exposition of Lord Chesterfield's character and views of life. No other man could have written them; no other man have conceived the notion of existence being one great effort to deceive, as well as to excel, and of society forming one gigantic lie. It is true they were addressed to one who was to enter the maze of a diplomatic career, and must be taken, on that account, with some reservation.

They have justly been condemned on the score of immorality; but we must remember that the age in which they were written was one of lax notions, especially among men of rank, who regarded all women accessible, either from indiscretion or inferiority of rank, as fair game, and acted accordingly. But whilst we agree with one of Johnson's bitterest sentences as to the immorality of Chesterfield's letters, we disagree with his styling his code of manners the manners of a dancing-master. Chesterfield was in himself a perfect instance of what he calls *les manières nobles;* and this even Johnson allowed.

'Talking of Chesterfield,' Johnson said, 'his manner was exquisitely elegant, and he had more knowledge than I expected.' Boswell: 'Did you find, sir, his conversation to be of a superior sort?'—Johnson: 'Sir, in the conversation which I had with him, I had the best right to superiority, for it was upon philology and literature.'

It was well remarked how extraordinary a thing it was that a man who loved his son so entirely should do all he could to make him a rascal. And Foote even contemplated bringing on the stage a father who had thus tutored his son; and intended to show the son an honest man in everything else, but practising his father's maxims upon him, and cheating him.

'It should be so contrived,' Johnson remarked, referring to Foote's plan, 'that the father should be the *only* sufferer by the son's villany, and thus there would be poetical justice.' 'Take out the immorality,' he added, on another occasion, 'and the book (Chesterfield's Letters to his Son) should be put into the hands of every young gentleman.'

We are inclined to differ, and to confess to a moral taint throughout the whole of the Letters; and even had the immorality been expunged, the false motives, the deep, invariable advocacy of principles of expediency would have poisoned what otherwise might be of effectual benefit to the minor virtues of polite society.

THE ABBÉ SCARRON.

THE ABBÉ SCARRON.

THERE is an Indian or Chinese legend, I forget which, from which Mrs. Shelley may have taken her hideous idea of Frankenstein. We are told in this allegory that, after fashioning some thousands of men after the most approved model, endowing them with all that is noble, generous, admirable, and loveable in man or woman, the eastern Prometheus grew weary in his work, stretched his hand for the beer-can, and draining it too deeply, lapsed presently into a state of what Germans call 'other-man-ness.' There is a simpler Anglo-Saxon term for this condition, but I spare you. The eastern Prometheus went on seriously with his work, and still produced the same perfect models, faultless alike in brain and leg. But when it came to the delicate finish, when the last touches were to be made, his hand shook a little, and the more delicate members went awry. It was thus that instead of the power of seeing every colour properly, one man came out with a pair of optics which turned everything to green, and this verdancy probably transmitted itself to the intelligence. Another, to continue the allegory, whose tympanum had slipped a little under the unsteady fingers of the man-maker, heard everything in a wrong sense, and his life was miserable, because, if you sang

his praises, he believed you were ridiculing him, and if you heaped abuse upon him, he thought you were telling lies of him.

But as Prometheus Orientalis grew more jovial, it seems to have come into his head to make mistakes on purpose. 'I'll have a friend to laugh with,' quoth he; and when warned by an attendant Yaksha, or demon, that men who laughed one hour often wept the next, he swore a lusty oath, struck his thumb heavily on a certain bump in the skull he was completing, and holding up his little doll, cried, 'Here is one who will laugh at everything!'

I must now add what the legend neglects to tell. The model laugher succeeded well enough in his own reign, but he could not beget a large family. The laughers who never weep, the real clowns of life, who do not, when the curtain drops, retire, after an infinitesimal allowance of 'cordial,' to a half-starved, complaining family, with brats that cling round his parti-coloured stockings, and cry to him—not for jokes—but for bread, these laughers, I say, are few and far between. You should, therefore, be doubly grateful to me for introducing to you now one of the most famous of them; one who with all right and title to be lugubrious, was the merriest man of his age.

On Shrove Tuesday, in the year 1638, the good city of Mans was in a state of great excitement: the carnival was at its height, and everybody was gone mad for one day before turning pious for the long, dull forty days of Lent. The market-place was filled with maskers in quaint costumes, each wilder and more extravagant than the last. Here were magicians with high peaked hats covered with cabalistic signs, here Eastern sultans of the medieval model, with very fierce looks and very large scimitars: here Amadis de Gaul with a wagging plume a yard high, here Pantagruel, here harlequins, here Huguenots ten times more lugubrious than the despised sectaries they mocked, here

Cæsar and Pompey in trunk hose and Roman helmets, and a mass of other notabilities who were great favourites in that day, appeared.

But who comes here? What is the meaning of these roars of laughter that greet the last mask who runs into the market-place? Why do all the women and children hurry together, calling up one another, and shouting with delight? What is this thing? Is it some new species of bird, thus covered with feathers and down? In a few minutes the little figure is surrounded by a crowd of boys and women, who begin to pluck him of his borrowed plumes, while he chatters to them like a magpie, whistles like a song-bird, croaks like a raven, or in his natural character showers a mass of funny nonsense on them, till their laughter makes their sides ache. The little wretch is literally covered with small feathers from head to foot, and even his face is not to be recognized. The women pluck him behind and before; he dances round and tries to evade their fingers. This is impossible; he breaks away, runs down the market pursued by a shouting crowd, is again surrounded, and again subjected to a plucking process. The bird must be stripped; he must be discovered. Little by little his back is bared, and little by little is seen a black jerkin, black stockings, and, wonder upon wonder! the bands of a canon. Now they have cleared his face of its plumage, and a cry of disgust and shame hails the disclosure. Yes, this curious masker is no other than a reverend abbé, a young canon of the cathedral of Mans! 'This is too much—it is scandalous—it is disgraceful. The church must be respected, the sacred order must not descend to such frivolities.' The people, lately laughing, are now furious at the shameless abbé, and not his liveliest wit can save him; they threaten and cry shame on him, and in terror of his life, he beats his way through the crowd, and takes to his heels. The mob follows hooting and savage. The little man is nimble; those well-

shaped legs— *qui ont si bien dansé*—stand him in good stead. Down the streets, and out of the town go hare and hounds. The pursuers gain on him—a bridge, a stream filled with tall reeds, and delightfully miry, are all the hope of refuge he sees before him. He leaps gallantly from the bridge in among the oziers, and has the joy of listening to the disappointed curses of the mob, when reaching the stream, their quarry is nowhere to be seen. The reeds conceal him, and there he lingers till nightfall, when he can issue from his lurking-place and escape from the town.

Such was the mad freak which deprived the Abbé Scarron of the use of his limbs for life. His health was already ruined when he indulged this caprice; the damp of the river brought on a violent attack, which closed with palsy, and the gay young abbé had to pay dearly for the pleasure of astonishing the citizens of Mans. The disguise was easily accounted for—he had smeared himself with honey, ripped open a feather-bed, and rolled himself in it.

This little incident gives a good idea of what Scarron was in his younger days—ready at any time for any wild caprice.

Paul Scarron was the son of a Conseiller du Parlement of good family, resident in Paris. He was born in 1610, and his early days would have been wretched enough, if his elastic spirits had allowed him to give way to misery. His father was a good-natured, weak-minded man, who on the death of his first wife married a second, who, as one hen will peck at another's chicks, would not, as a stepmother, leave the little Paul in peace. She was continually putting her own children forward, and ill-treating the late 'anointed' son. The father gave in too readily, and young Paul was glad enough to be set free from his unhappy home. There may be some excuse in this for the licentious living to which he now gave himself up. He was heir to a decent fortune, and of course thought himself justified in spending it beforehand. Then, in spite of his quaint little figure, he had something

attractive about him, for his merry face was good-looking, if not positively handsome. If we add to this, spirits as buoyant as an Irishman's—a mind that not only saw the ridiculous wherever it existed, but could turn the most solemn and awful themes to laughter, a vast deal of good-nature, and not a little assurance—we can understand that the young Scarron was a favourite with both men and women, and among the reckless pleasure-seekers of the day soon became one of the wildest. In short, he was a fast young Parisian, with as little care for morality or religion as any youth who saunters on the Boulevards of the French capital to this day.

But his stepmother was not content with getting rid of young Paul, but had her eye also on his fortune, and therefore easily persuaded her husband that the service of the church was precisely the career for which the young reprobate was fitted. There was an uncle who was Bishop of Grenoble, and a canonry could easily be got for him. The fast youth was compelled to give in to this arrangement, but declined to take full orders; so that while drawing the revenue of his stall, he had nothing to do with the duties of his calling. Then, too, it was rather a fashionable thing to be an abbé, especially a gay one. The position placed you on a level with people of all ranks. Half the court was composed of love-making ecclesiastics, and the *soutane* was a kind of diploma for wit and wickedness. Viewed in this light, the church was as jovial a profession as the army, and the young Scarron went to the full extent of the letter allowed to the black gown. It was only such stupid superstitious louts as those of Mans, who did not know anything of the ways of Paris life, who could object to such little freaks as he loved to indulge in.

The merry little abbé was soon the delight of the Marais. This distinct and antiquated quarter of Paris was then the Mayfair of that capital. Here lived in ease, and contempt of the bourgeoisie, the great, the gay, the courtier, and the

wit. Here Marion de Lorme received old cardinals and young abbés; here were the salons of Madame de Martel, of the Comtesse de la Suze, who changed her creed in order to avoid seeing her husband in this world or the next, and the famous—or infamous—Ninon de l'Enclos; and at these houses young Scarron met the courtly Saint-Evremond, the witty Sarrazin, and the learned, but arrogant Voiture. Here he read his skits and parodies, here travestied Virgil, made epigrams on Richelieu, and poured out his indelicate but always laughable witticisms. But his indulgences were not confined to intrigues; he also drank deep, and there was not a pleasure within his reach, which he ever thought of denying himself. He laughed at religion, thought morality a nuisance, and resolved to be merry at all costs.

The little account was brought in at last. At the age of five-and-twenty his constitution was broken up. Gout and rheumatism assailed him alternately or in leash. He began to feel the annoyance of the constraint they occasioned; he regretted those legs which had figured so well in a ronde or a minuet, and those hands which had played the lute to dames more fair than modest; and, to add to this, the pain he suffered was not slight. He sought relief in gay society, and was cheerful in spite of his sufferings. At length came the Shrove Tuesday and the feathers; and the consequences were terrible. He was soon a prey to doctors, whom he believed in no more than in the church of which he was so great a light. His legs were no longer his own, so he was obliged to borrow those of a chair. He was soon tucked down into a species of dumb-waiter on castors, in which he could be rolled about in a party, just as the late Lady Charleville was. In front of this chair was fastened a desk, on which he wrote; for too wise to be overcome by his agony, he drove it away by cultivating his imagination, and in this way some of the most fantastic productions in French literature were composed by this quaint little abbé.

Nor was sickness his only trial now. Old Scarron was a citizen, and had, what was then criminal, sundry ideas of the liberty of the nation. He saw with disgust the tyranny of Richelieu, and joined a party in the Parliament to oppose the cardinal's measures. He even had the courage to speak openly against one of the court edicts; and the pitiless cardinal, who never overlooked any offence, banished him to Touraine, and naturally extended his animosity to the conseiller's son. This happened at a moment at which the cripple believed himself to be on the road to favour. He had already won that of Madame de Hautefort, on whom Louis XIII. had set his affections, and this lady had promised to present him to Anne of Austria. The father's honest boldness put a stop to the son's intended servility, and Scarron lamented his fate in a letter to Pellisson:

'O mille écus, par malheur retranchés,
Que vous pouviez m'épargner de péchés!
Quand un valet me dit, tremblant et hâve,
Nous n'avons plus de bûches dans la cave
Que pour aller jusqu'à demain matin,
Je peste alors sur mon chien de destin,
Sur le grand froid, sur le bois de la grève,
Qu'on vend si cher, et qui si-tôt s'achève.
Je jure alors, et même je médis
De l'action de mon père étourdi,
Quand sans songer à ce qu'il allait faire
Il m'ébaucha sous un astre contraire,
Et m'acheva par un discours maudit
Qu'il fit depuis sur un certain édit.'

The father died in exile: his second wife had spent the greater part of the son's fortune, and secured the rest for her own children. Scarron was left with a mere pittance, and, to complete his troubles, was involved in a lawsuit about the property. The cripple, with his usual impudence, resolved to plead his own cause, and did it only too well; he made the judges laugh so loud that they took the whole

thing to be a farce on his part, and gave—most ungratefully—judgment against him.

Glorious days were those for the penniless, halcyon days for the toady and the sycophant. There was still much of the old oriental munificence about the court, and sovereigns like Mazarin and Louis XIV. granted pensions for a copy of flattering verses, or gave away places as the reward of a judicious speech. Sinecures were legion, yet to many a holder they were no sinecures at all, for they entailed constant servility and a complete abdication of all freedom of opinion.

Scarron was nothing more than a merry buffoon. Many another man has gained a name for his mirth, but most of them have been at least independent. Scarron seems to have cared for nothing that was honourable or dignified. He laughed at everything but money, and at that he smiled, though it is only fair to say that he was never avaricious, but only cared for ease and a little luxury.

When Richelieu died, and the gentler, but more subtle Mazarin mounted his throne, Madame de Hautefort made another attempt to present her *protégé* to the queen, and this time succeeded. Anne of Austria had heard of the quaint little man who could laugh over a lawsuit in which his whole fortune was staked, and received him graciously. He begged for some place to support him. What could he do? What was he fit for? 'Nothing, your majesty, but the important office of The Queen's Patient; for that I am fully qualified.' Anne smiled, and Scarron from that time styled himself 'par la grace de Dieu, le malade de la Reine.' But there was no stipend attached to this novel office. Mazarin procured him a pension of 500 crowns. He was then publishing his 'Typhon, or the Gigantomachy,' and dedicated it to the cardinal, with an adulatory sonnet. He forwarded the great man a splendidly-bound copy, which was accepted with nothing more than thanks. In a rage the author suppressed

the sonnet and substituted a satire. This piece was bitterly cutting, and terribly true. It galled Mazarin to the heart, and he was undignified enough to revenge himself by cancelling the poor little pension of 60*l.* per annum which had previously been granted to the writer. Scarron having lost his pension, soon afterwards asked for an abbey, but was refused. 'Then give me,' said he, 'a simple benefice, so simple, indeed, that all its duties will be comprised in believing in God.' But Scarron had the satisfaction of gaining a great name among the cardinal's many enemies, and with none more so than De Retz, then *coadjuteur** to the Archbishop of Paris, and already deeply implicated in the Fronde movement. To insure the favour of this rising man, Scarron determined to dedicate to him a work he was just about to publish, and on which he justly prided himself as by far his best. This was the 'Roman Comique,' the only one of his productions which is still read. That it should be read, I can quite understand, on account not only of the ease of its style, but of the ingenuity of its improbable plots, the truth of the characters, and the charming bits of satire which are found here and there, like gems, amid a mass of mere fun. The scene is laid at Mans, the town in which the author had himself perpetrated his chief follies; and many of the characters were probably drawn from life, while it is likely enough that some of the stories were taken from facts which had there come to his knowledge. As in many of the romances of that age, a number of episodes are introduced into the main story, which consists of the adventures of a strolling company. These are mainly amatory, and all indelicate, while some are positively dirty, and as coarse as anything in French literature. Scarron had little of the clear wit of Rabelais to atone for this; but he makes up for it, in a measure, by the utter absurdity of some of his incidents. Not the least curious part of the book is the Preface, in which he gives a descrip-

* *Coadjuteur.*—A high office in the Church of Rome.

tion of himself, in order to contradict, as he affirms, the extravagant reports circulated about him, to the effect that he was set upon a table in a cage, or that his hat was fastened to the ceiling by a pulley, that he might 'pluck it up or let it down, to do compliment to a friend, who honoured him with a visit.' This description is a tolerable specimen of his style, and we give it in the quaint language of an old translation, published in 1741:—

'I am past thirty, as thou may'st see by the back of my Chair. If I live to be forty, I shall add the Lord knows how many Misfortunes to those I have already suffered for these eight or nine Years last past. There was a Time when my Stature was not to be found Fault with, tho' now 'tis of the smallest. My Sickness has taken me shorter by a Foot. My Head is somewhat too big, considering my Height; and my Face is full enough, in all Conscience, for one that carries such a Skeleton of a Body about him. I have Hair enough on my Head not to stand in need of a Peruke; and 'tis gray, too, in spight of the Proverb. My Sight is good enough, tho' my Eyes are large; they are of a blue Colour, and one of them is sunk deeper into my Head than the other, which was occasion'd by my leaning on that Side. My Nose is well enough mounted. My Teeth, which in the Days of Yore look'd like a Row of square Pearl, are now of an Ashen Colour; and in a few Years more, will have the Complexion of a Small-coal Man's Saturday Shirt. I have lost one Tooth and a half on the left Side, and two and a half precisely on the right; and I have two more that stand somewhat out of their Ranks. My Legs and Thighs, in the first place, compose an obtuse Angle, then a right one, and lastly an acute. My Thighs and Body make another; and my Head, leaning perpetually over my Belly, I fancy makes me not very unlike the Letter Z. My Arms are shortened, as well as my Legs; and my Fingers as well as my Arms. In short, I am a living Epitome of human Misery. This, as near as I can

give it, is my Shape. Since I am got so far, I will e'en tell thee something of my Humour. Under the Rose, be it spoken, Courteous Reader, I do this only to swell the Bulk of my Book, at the Request of the Bookseller—the poor Dog, it seems, being afraid he should be a Loser by this Impression, if he did not give Buyer enough for his Money.'

This allusion to the publisher reminds us that, on the suppression of his pension—on hearing of which Scarron only said, 'I should like, then, to suppress myself'—he had to live on the profits of his works. In later days it was Madame Scarron herself who often carried them to the bookseller's, when there was not a penny in the house. The publisher was Quinet, and the merry wit, when asked whence he drew his income, used to reply with mock haughtiness, 'De mon Marquisat de Quinet.' His comedies, which have been described as mere burlesques—I confess I have never read them, and hope to be absolved—were successful enough, and if Scarron had known how to keep what he made, he might sooner or later have been in easy circumstances. He knew neither that nor any other art of self-restraint, and, therefore, was in perpetual vicissitudes of riches and penury. At one time he could afford to dedicate a piece to his sister's greyhound, at another he was servile in his address to some prince or duke.

In the latter spirit, he humbled himself before Mazarin, in spite of the publication of his 'Mazarinade,' and was, as he might have expected, repulsed. He then turned to Fouquet, the new Surintendant de Finances, who was liberal enough with the public money, which he so freely embezzled, and extracted from him a pension of 1,600 francs (about 64*l*.). In one way or another, he got back a part of the property his stepmother had alienated from him, and obtained a prebend in the diocese of Mans, which made up his income to something more respectable.

He was now able to indulge to the utmost his love of society. In his apartment, in the Rue St. Louis, he received all the leaders of the Fronde, headed by De Retz, and bringing with them their pasquinades on Mazarin, which the easy Italian read and laughed at and pretended to heed not at all. Politics, however, was not the staple of the conversation at Scarron's. He was visited as a curiosity, as a clever buffoon, and those who came to see, remained to laugh. He kept them all alive by his coarse, easy, impudent wit; in which there was more vulgarity and dirtiness than ill-nature. He had a fund of *bonhommie*, which set his visitors at their ease, for no one was afraid of being bitten by the chained dog they came to pat. His salon became famous; and the admission to it was a diploma of wit. He kept out all the dull, and ignored all the simply great. Any man who could say a good thing, tell a good story, write a good lampoon, or mimic a fool, was a welcome guest. Wits mingled with pedants, courtiers with poets. Abbés and gay women were at home in the easy society of the cripple, and circulated freely round his dumb-waiter.

The ladies of the party were not the most respectable in Paris, yet some who were models of virtue met there, without a shudder, many others who were patterns of vice. Ninon de l'Enclos—then young—though age made no alteration in *her*—and already slaying her scores, and ruining her hundreds of admirers, there met Madame de Sévigné, the most respectable, as well as the most agreeable, woman of that age. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, leaving, for the time, her twelve-volume romance, about Cyrus and Ibrahim, led on a troop of Molière's Précieuses Ridicules, and here recited her verses, and talked pedantically to Pellisson, the ugliest man in Paris, of whom Boileau wrote:

'L'or même à Pellisson donne un teint de beauté.'

Then there was Madame de la Sablière, who was as masculine

as her husband the marquis was effeminate; the Duchesse de Lesdiguières, who was so anxious to be thought a wit that she employed the Chevalier de Méré to make her one; and the Comtesse de la Suze, a clever but foolish woman.

The men were poets, courtiers, and pedants. Ménage with his tiresome memory, Montreuil and Marigni the song-writers, the elegant De Grammont, Turenne, Coligni, the gallant Abbé Têtu, and many another celebrity, thronged the rooms where Scarron sat in his curious wheelbarrow.

The conversation was decidedly light; often, indeed, obscene, in spite of the presence of ladies; but always witty. The hostility of Scarron to the reigning cardinal was a great recommendation, and when all else flagged, or the cripple had an unusually sharp attack, he had but to start with a line of his 'Mazarinade,' and out came a fresh lampoon, a new caricature, or fresh rounds of wit fired off at the Italian, from the well-filled cartridge-boxes of the guests, many of whom kept their *mots* ready made up for discharge.

But a change came over the spirit of the paralytic's dream. In the Rue St. Louis, close to Scarron's, lived a certain Madame Neuillant, who visited him as a neighbour, and one day excited his curiosity by the romantic history of a mother and daughter, who had long lived in Martinique, who had been ruined by the extravagance and follies of a reprobate husband and father; and were now living in great poverty—the daughter being supported by Madame de Neuillant herself. The good-natured cripple was touched by this story, and begged his neighbour to bring the unhappy ladies to one of his parties. The evening came; the abbé was, as usual, surrounded by a circle of lady-wits, dressed in the last fashions, flaunting their fans, and laughing merrily at his sallies. Madame de Neuillant was announced, and entered, followed by a simply-dressed lady, with the melancholy face of one broken-down by misfortunes, and a pretty girl of fifteen. The contrast between the new-comers and the fashionable *habituées*

around him at once struck the abbé. The girl was not only badly, but even shabbily dressed, and the shortness of her gown showed that she had grown out of it, and could not afford a new one. The *grandes dames* turned upon her their eye-glasses, and whispered comments behind their fans. She was very pretty, they said, very interesting, elegant, lady-like, and so on; but, *parbleu!* how shamefully *mal mise!* The new-comers were led up to the cripple's dumb-waiter, and the *grandes dames* drew back their ample petticoats as they passed. The young girl was overcome with shame; their whispers reached her; she cast down her pretty eyes, and growing more and more confused, she could bear it no longer, and burst into tears. The abbé and his guests were touched by her shyness, and endeavoured to restore her confidence. Scarron himself leant over, and whispered a few kind words in her ear; then breaking out into some happy pleasantry, he gave her time to recover her composure. Such was the first *début*, in Parisian society, of Françoise d'Aubigné, who was destined, as Madame Scarron, to be afterwards one of its leaders, and, as Madame de Maintenon, to be its ruler.

Some people are cursed with bad sons—some with erring daughters. Françoise d'Aubigné was long the victim of a wicked father. Constans d'Aubigné belonged to an old and honourable family, and was the son of that famous old Huguenot general, Théodore-Agrippa d'Aubigné, who fought for a long time under Henry of Navarre, and in his old age wrote the history of his times. To counterbalance this distinction, the son Constans brought all the discredit he could on the family. After a reckless life, in which he squandered his patrimony, he married a rich widow, and then, it is said, contrived to put her out of the way. He was imprisoned as a murderer, but acquitted for want of evidence. The story goes, that he was liberated by the daughter of the governor of the gaol, whom he had seduced in the prison, and whom he

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married when free. He sought to retrieve his fortune in the island of Martinique, ill-treated his wife, and eventually ran away and left her and her children to their fate. They followed him to France, and found him again incarcerated. Madame d'Aubigné was foolishly fond of her good-for-nothing spouse, and lived with him in his cell, where the little Françoise, who had been born in prison, was now educated.

Rescued from starvation by a worthy Huguenot aunt, Madame de Villette, the little girl was brought up as a Protestant, and a very stanch one she proved for a time. But Madame d'Aubigné, who was a Romanist, would not allow her to remain long under the Calvinist lady's protection, and sent her to be converted by her godmother, the Madame de Neuillant above mentioned. This woman, who was as merciless as a woman can be, literally broke her into Romanism, treated her like a servant, made her groom the horses, and comb the maid's hair, and when all these efforts failed, sent her to a convent to be finished off. The nuns did by specious reasoning what had been begun by persecution, and young Françoise, at the time she was introduced to Scarron, was a highly respectable member of 'the only true church.'

Madame d'Aubigné was at this time supporting herself by needlework. Her sad story won the sympathy of Scarron's guests, who united to relieve her wants. *La belle Indienne,* as the cripple styled her, soon became a favourite at his parties, and lost her shyness by degrees. Ninon de l'Enclos, who did not want heart, took her by the hand, and a friendship thus commenced between that inveterate Laïs and the future wife of Louis XIV. which lasted till death.

The beauty of Françoise soon brought her many admirers, among whom was even one of Ninon's slaves; but as marriage was not the object of these attentions, and the young girl would not relinquish her virtue, she remained for some time unmarried, but respectable. Scarron was particularly fond of her, and well knew that, portionless as she was, the poor girl

would have but little chance of making a match. His kindness touched her, his wit charmed her; she pitied his infirmities, and, as his neighbour, frequently saw and tried to console him. On the other hand the cripple, though forty years old, and in a state of health which it is impossible to describe, fell positively in love with the young girl, who alone of all the ladies who visited him combined wit with perfect modesty. He pitied her destitution. There was mutual pity, and we all know what passion that feeling is akin to.

Still, for a paralytic, utterly unfit for marriage in any point of view, to offer to a beautiful young girl, would have seemed ridiculous, if not unpardonable. But let us take into account the difference in ideas of matrimony between ourselves and the French. We must remember that marriage has always been regarded among our neighbours as a contract for mutual benefit, into which the consideration of money of necessity entered largely. It is true that some qualities are taken as equivalents for actual cash: thus, if a young man has a straight and well-cut nose he may sell himself at a higher price than young Lefèvre there with the hideous pug; if a girl is beautiful, the marquis will be content with some thousands of francs less for her dower than if her hair were red, or her complexion irreclaimably brown. If Julie has a pretty foot, a *svelte* waist, and can play the piano thunderingly, or sing in the charmingest soprana, her ten thousand francs are quite as acceptable as those of stout, awkward, glum-faced Jeannette. The faultless boots and yellow kids of young Adolphe counterbalance the somewhat apocryphal vicomté of ill-kempt and ill-attired Henri.

But then there must be *some* fortune. A Frenchman is so much in the habit of expecting it, that he thinks it almost a crime to fall in love where there is none. Françoise, pretty, clever, agreeable as she was, was penniless, and even worse, she was the daughter of a man who had been imprisoned on suspicion of murder, and a woman who had gained her liveli-

hood by needlework. All these considerations made the fancy of the merry abbé less ridiculous, and Françoise herself, being sufficiently versed in the ways of the world to understand the disadvantage under which she laboured, was less amazed and disgusted than another girl might have been, when, in due course, the cripple offered her himself and his dumb-waiter. He had little more to give—his pension, a tiny income from his prebend and his Marquisat de Quinet.

The offer of the little man was not so amusing as other episodes of his life. He went honestly to work; represented to her what a sad lot would hers be, if Madame de Neuillant died, and what were the temptations of beauty without a penny. His arguments were more to the point than delicate, and he talked to the young girl as if she was a woman of the world. Still, she accepted him, cripple as he was.

Madame de Neuillant made no objection, for she was only too glad to be rid of a beauty, who ate and drank, but did not marry.

On the making of the contract, Scarron's fun revived. When asked by the notary what was the young lady's fortune, he replied: 'Four louis, two large wicked eyes, one fine figure, one pair of good hands, and lots of mind.' 'And what do you give her?' asked the lawyer.—'Immortality,' replied he, with the air of a bombastic poet. 'The names of the wives of kings die with them—that of Scarron's wife will live for ever!'

His marriage obliged him to give up his canonry, which he sold to Ménage's man-servant, a little bit of simony which was not even noticed in those days. It is amusing to find a man who laughed at all religion, insisting that his wife should make a formal avowal of the Romish faith. Of the character of this marriage we need say no more than that Scarron had at that time the use of no more than his eyes, tongue, and hands. Yet such was then, as now, the idea of matrimony in France, that the young lady's friends considered her fortunate.

Scarron in love was a picture which amazed and amused the whole society of Paris, but Scarron married was still more curious. The queen, when she heard of it, said that Françoise would be nothing but a useless bit of furniture in his house. She proved not only the most useful appendage he could have, but the salvation alike of his soul and his reputation. The woman who charmed Louis XIV. by her good sense, had enough of it to see Scarron's faults, and prided herself on reforming him as far as it was possible. Her husband had hitherto been the great Nestor of indelicacy, and when he was induced to give it up, the rest followed his example. Madame Scarron checked the licence of the abbé's conversation, and even worked a beneficial change in his mind.

The joviality of their parties still continued. Scarron had always been famous for his *petits soupers*, the fashion of which he introduced, but as his poverty would not allow him to give them in proper style, his friends made a pic-nic of it, and each one either brought or sent his own dish of ragout, or whatever it might be, and his own bottle of wine. This does not seem to have been the case after the marriage, however; for it is related as a proof of Madame Scarron's conversational powers, that, when one evening a poorer supper than usual was served, the waiter whispered in her ear, 'Tell them another story, Madame, if you please, for we have no joint to-night.' Still both guests and host could well afford to dispense with the coarseness of the cripple's talk, which might raise a laugh, but must sometimes have caused disgust, and the young wife of sixteen succeeded in making him purer both in his conversation and his writings.

The household she entered was indeed a villanous one. Scarron rather gloried in his early delinquencies, and, to add to this, his two sisters had characters far from estimable. One of them had been maid of honour to the Princesse de Conti, but had given up her appointment to become the mistress of

the Duc de Trêmes. The laugher laughed even at his sister's dishonour, and allowed her to live in the same house on a higher *étage*. When, on one occasion, some one called on him to solicit the lady's interest with the duke, he coolly said, 'You are mistaken; it is not I who know the duke; go up to the next storey.' The offspring of this connection he styled 'his nephews after the fashion of the Marais.' Françoise did her best to reclaim this sister and to conceal her shame, but the laughing abbé made no secret of it.

But the laugher was approaching his end. His attacks became more and more violent: still he laughed at them. Once he was seized with a terrible choking hiccup, which threatened to suffocate him. The first moment he could speak he cried, 'If I get well, I'll write a satire on the hiccup.' The priests came about him, and his wife did what she could to bring him to a sense of his future danger. He laughed at the priests and at his wife's fears. She spoke of hell. 'If there is such a place,' he answered, 'it won't be for me, for without you I must have had my hell in this life.' The priest told him, by way of consolation, that 'God had visited him more than any man.'—'He does me too much honour,' answered the mocker. 'You should give him thanks,' urged the ecclesiastic. 'I can't see for what,' was the shameless answer.

On his death-bed he parodied a will, leaving to Corneille 'two hundred pounds of patience; to Boileau (with whom he had a long feud), the gangrene; and to the Academy, the power to alter the French language as they liked.' His legacy in verse to his wife is grossly disgusting, and quite unfit for quotation. Yet he loved her well, avowed that his chief grief in dying was the necessity of leaving her, and begged her to remember him sometimes, and to lead a virtuous life.

His last moments were as jovial as any. When he saw his friends weeping around him he shook his head and cried,

'I shall never make you weep as much as I have made you laugh.' A little later a softer thought of hope came across him. 'No more sleeplessness, no more gout,' he murmured; 'the Queen's patient will be well at last.' At length the laugher was sobered. In the presence of death, at the gates of a new world, he muttered, half afraid, 'I never thought it was so easy to laugh at death,' and so expired. This was in October, 1660, when the cripple had reached the age of fifty.

Thus died a laugher. It is unnecessary here to trace the story of his widow's strange rise to be the wife of a king. Scarron was no honour to her, and in later years she tried to forget his existence. Boileau fell into disgrace for merely mentioning his name before the king. Yet Scarron was in many respects a better man than Louis; and, laugher as he was, he had a good heart. There is a time for mirth and a time for mourning, the Preacher tells us. Scarron never learned this truth, and he laughed too much and too long. Yet let us not end the laugher's life in sorrow:

'It is well to be merry and wise,' &c.

Let us be merry as the poor cripple, who bore his sufferings so well, and let us be wise too. There is a lesson for gay and grave in the life of Scarron, the laugher.

FRANCOIS, DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT AND THE DUC DE SAINT-SIMON.

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THE precursor of Saint-Simon, the model of Lord Chesterfield, this ornament of his age, belonged, as well as Saint-Simon, to that state of society in France which was characterised—as Lord John Russell, in his 'Memoirs of the Duchess of Orleans,' tells us—by an idolatry of power and station. 'God would not condemn a person of that rank,' was the exclamation of a lady of the old *régime*, on hearing that a notorious sinner, 'Pair de France,' and one knows not what else, had gone to his account impenitent and unabsolved; and though the sentiment may strike us as profane, it was, doubtless, genuine.

Rank, however, was often adorned by accomplishments which, like an exemption from rules of conduct, it almost claimed as a privilege. Good breeding was a science in France; natural to a peasant, even, it was studied as an epitome of all the social virtues. '*N'être pas poli*' was the sum total of all dispraise: a man could only recover from it by splendid valour or rare gifts; a woman could not hope to rise out of that Slough of Despond to which good-breeding never came. We were behind all the arts of civilization in England, as François de Rochefoucault (we give the orthography of the present day) was in his cradle. This

brilliant personage, who combined the wit and the moralist, the courtier and the soldier, the man of literary tastes and the sentimentalist *par excellence*, was born in 1613. In addition to his hereditary title of duc, he had the empty honour, as Saint-Simon calls it, of being Prince de Marsillac, a designation which was lost in that of *De la Rochefoucault*—so famous even to the present day. As he presented himself at the court of the regency, over which Anne of Austria nominally presided, no youth there was more distinguished for his elegance or for the fame of his exploits during the wars of the Fronde than this youthful scion of an illustrious house. Endowed by nature with a pleasing countenance, and, what was far more important in that fastidious region, an air of dignity, he displayed wonderful contradictions in his character and bearing. He had, says Madame de Maintenon, '*beaucoup d'esprit, et peu de savoir;*' an expressive phrase. 'He was,' she adds, 'pliant in nature, intriguing, and cautious;' nevertheless she never, she declares, possessed a more steady friend, nor one more confiding and better adapted to advise. Brave as he was, he held personal valour, or affected to do so, in light estimation. His ambition was to rule others. Lively in conversation, though naturally pensivè, he assembled around him all that Paris or Versailles could present of wit and intellect.

The old Hôtel de Rochefoucault, in the Rue de Seine, in the Faubourg St. Germain, in Paris, still grandly recalls the assemblies in which Racine, Boileau, Madame de Sévigné, the La Fayettes, and the famous Duchesse de Longueville, used to assemble. The time-honoured family of De la Rochefoucault still preside there; though one of its fairest ornaments, the young, lovely, and pious Duchesse de la Rochefoucault of our time, died in 1852—one of the first known victims to diphtheria in France, in that unchanged old locality. There, where the De Longuevilles, the Mazarins, and those who had formed the famous council of state of Anne of Austria had

disappeared, the poets and wits who gave to the age of Louis XIV. its true brilliancy, collected around the Duc de la Rochefoucault. What a scene it must have been, in those days when, as Buffon said of the earth in spring, '*tout fourmille de vie!*' Let us people the salon of the Hôtel de Rochefoucault with visions of the past; see the host there, in his chair, a martyr to the gout, which he bore with all the cheerfulness of a Frenchman, and picture to ourselves the great men who were handing him his cushion, or standing near his *fauteuil.*

Racine's joyous face may be imagined as he comes in fresh from the College of Harcourt. Since he was born in 1639, he had not arrived at his zenith till La Rochefoucault was almost past his prime. For a man at thirty-six in France can no longer talk prospectively of the departure of youth; it is gone. A single man of thirty, even in Paris, is '*un vieux garçon:*' life begins too soon and ends too soon with those pleasant sinners, the French. And Racine, when he was first routed out of Port Royal, where he was educated, and presented to the whole Faubourg St. Germain, beheld his patron, La Rochefoucault, in the position of a disappointed man. An early adventure of his youth had humbled, perhaps, the host of the Hôtel de Rochefoucault. At the battle of St. Antoine, where he had distinguished himself, a musket-ball had nearly deprived him of sight. On this occasion he had quoted these lines, taken from the tragedy of '*Alcyonnée.*' It must, however, be premised that the famous Duchesse de Longueville had urged him to engage in the wars of the Fronde. To her these lines were addressed:—

'Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux Rois, je l'aurais faite aux dieux.'

But now he had broken off his intimacy with the duchesse, and he therefore parodied these lines:—

'Pour ce cœur inconstant, qu'enfin je connais mieux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux Rois, j'en ai perdue les yeux.'

Nevertheless La Rochefoucault was still the gay, charming, witty host and courtier. Racine composed, in 1660, his '*Nymphe de Seine*,' in honour of the marriage of Louis XIV., and was then brought into notice of those whose notice was no empty compliment, such as, in our day, illustrious dukes pay to more illustrious authors, by asking them to be jumbled in a crowd at a time when the rooks are beginning to caw. We catch, as they may, the shadow of a dissolving water-ice, or see the exit of an unattainable tray of negus. No; in the days of Racine, as in those of Halifax and Swift in England, solid fruits grew out of fulsome praise; and Colbert, then minister, settled a pension of six hundred livres, as francs were called in those days (twenty-four pounds), on the poet. And with this the former pupil of Port Royal was fain to be content. Still he was so poor that he *almost* went into the church, an uncle offering to resign him a priory of his order if he would become a regular. He was a candidate for orders, and wore a sacerdotal dress when he wrote the tragedy of 'Theagenes,' and that of the 'Frères Ennemis,' the subject of which was given him by Molière.

He continued, in spite of a quarrel with the saints of Port Royal, to produce noble dramas from time to time, but quitted theatrical pursuits after bringing out (in 1677) 'Phèdre,' that *chef-d'œuvre* not only of its author, but, as a performance, of the unhappy but gifted Rachel. Corneille was old, and Paris looked to Racine to supply his place, yet he left the theatrical world for ever. Racine had been brought up with deep religious convictions; they could not, however, preserve him from a mad, unlawful attachment. He loved the actress Champmesle: but repentance came. He resolved not only to write no more plays, but to do penance for those already given to the world. He was on the eve of becoming, in his penitence, a Carthusian friar, when his

religious director advised marriage instead. He humbly did as he was told, and united himself to the daughter of a treasurer for France, of Amiens, by whom he had seven children. It was only at the request of Madame de Maintenon that he wrote 'Esther' for the convent of St. Cyr, where it was first acted.

His death was the result of his benevolent, sensitive nature. Having drawn up an excellent paper on the miseries of the people, he gave it to Madame de Maintenon to read it to the king. Louis, in a transport of ill-humour, said, 'What! does he suppose because he is a poet that he ought to be minister of state?' Racine is said to have been so wounded by this speech that he was attacked by a fever and died. His decease took place in 1699, nineteen years after that of La Rochefoucault, who died in 1680.

Amongst the circle whom La Rochefoucault loved to assemble was Boileau, Despréaux, and Madame de Sévigné—the one whose wit and the other whose grace completed the delights of that salon. A life so prosperous as La Rochefoucault's had but one cloud—the death of his son, who was killed during the passage of the French troops over the Rhine. We attach to the character of this accomplished man the charms of wit; we may also add the higher attractions of sensibility. Notwithstanding the worldly and selfish character which is breathed forth in his 'Maxims and Reflections,' there lay at the bottom of his heart true piety. Struck by the death of a neighbour, this sentiment seems even on the point of being expressed; but, adds Madame de Sévigné, and her phrase is untranslatable, '*il n'est pas effleuré.*'

All has passed away! the *Fronde* has become a memory, not a realized idea. Old people shake their heads, and talk of Richelieu; of his gorgeous palace at Rueil, with its lake and its prison thereon, and its mysterious dungeons, and its avenues of chestnuts, and its fine statues; and of its cardinal, smiling, whilst the worm that never dieth is eating into his

very heart; a seared conscience, and playing the fine gentleman to fine ladies in a rich stole, and with much garniture of costly lace; whilst beneath all is the hair shirt, that type of penitence and sanctity which he ever wore as a salvo against all that passion and ambition that almost burst the beating heart beneath that hair shirt. Richelieu has gone to his fathers. Mazarin comes on the scene; the wily, grasping Italian. He too vanishes; and forth, radiant in youth, and strong in power, comes Louis, and the reign of politeness and periwigs begins.

The Duc de Saint-Simon, perhaps the greatest portrait-painter of any time, has familiarized us with the greatness, the littleness, the graces, the defects of that royal actor on the stage of Europe, whom his own age entitled Louis the Great. A wit, in his writings, of the first order—if we comprise under the head of wit the deepest discernment, the most penetrating satire—Saint-Simon was also a soldier, philosopher, a reformer, a Trappist, and, eventually, a devotee. Like all young men who wished for court favour, he began by fighting: Louis cared little for carpet knights. He entered, however, into a scene which he has chronicled with as much fidelity as our journalists do a police report, and sat quietly down to gather up observations—not for his own fame, not even for the amusement of his children or grandchildren—but for the edification of posterity yet à century afar off his own time. The treasures were buried until 1829.

A word or two about Saint-Simon and his youth. At nineteen he was destined by his mother to be married. Now every one knows how marriages are managed in France, not only in the time of Saint-Simon, but even to the present day. A mother, or an aunt, or a grandmother, or an experienced friend, looks out; be it for son, be it for daughter, it is the business of her life. She looks and she finds: family, suitable; fortune, convenient; person, *pas mal;* principles, Catholic, with a due abhorrence of heretics, especially English

ones. After a time, the lady is to be looked at by the unhappy *prétendû;* a church, a mass, or vespers, being very often the opportunity agreed. The victim thinks she will do. The proposal is discussed by the two mammas; relatives are called in; all goes well; the contract is signed; then, a measured acquaintance is allowed: but no *tête-à-têtes;* no idea of love. 'What! so indelicate a sentiment before marriage! Let me not hear of it,' cries mamma, in a sanctimonious panic. 'Love! *Quelle bêtise!*' adds *mon père.*

But Saint-Simon, it seems, had the folly to wish to make a marriage of inclination. Rich, *pair de France,* his father—an old *roué,* who had been page to Louis XIII.—dead, he felt extremely alone in the world. He cast about to see whom he could select. The Duc de Beauvilliers had eight daughters; a misfortune, it may be thought, in France or anywhere else. Not at all: three of the young ladies were kept at home, to be married; the other five were at once disposed of, as they passed the unconscious age of infancy, in convents. Saint-Simon was, however, disappointed. He offered, indeed; first for the eldest, who was not then fifteen years old; and finding that she had a vocation for a conventual life, went on to the third, and was going through the whole family, when he was convinced that his suit was impossible. The eldest daughter happened to be a disciple of Fénélon's, and was on the very eve of being vowed to heaven.

Saint-Simon went off to La Trappe, to console himself for his disappointment. There had been an old intimacy between Monsieur La Trappe and the father of Saint-Simon; and this friendship had induced him to buy an estate close to the ancient abbey where La Trappe still existed. The friendship became hereditary; and Saint-Simon, though still a youth, revered and loved the penitent recluse of *Ferté au Vidame,* of which Lamartine has written so grand and so poetical a description.

Let us hasten over his marriage with Mademoiselle de

Lorges, who proved a good wife. It was this time a grandmother, the Maréchale de Lorges, who managed the treaty; and Saint-Simon became the happy husband of an innocent blonde, with a majestic air, though only fifteen years of age. Let us hasten on, passing over his presents; his six hundred louis, given in a corbeille full of what he styles 'galanteries;' his mother's donation of jewellery; the midnight mass, by which he was linked to the child who scarcely knew him; let us lay all that aside, and turn to his court life.

It was at this juncture that Louis XIV., who had hitherto dressed with great simplicity, indicated that he desired his court should appear in all possible magnificence. Instantly the shops were emptied. Even gold and silver appeared scarcely rich enough. Louis himself planned many of the dresses for any public occasion. Afterwards he repented of the extent to which he had permitted magnificence to go, but it was then impossible to check the excess.

Versailles, henceforth in all its grandeur, contains an apartment which is called, from its situation, and the opportunities it presents of looking down upon the actors of the scene around, *L'Œil de Bœuf*. The revelations of the Œil de Bœuf, during the reign of Louis XV., form one of the most amazing pictures of wickedness, venality, power misapplied, genius polluted, that was ever drawn. No one that reads that infamous book can wonder at the revolution of 1789. Let us conceive Saint-Simon to have taken his stand here, in this region, pure in the time of Louis XIV., comparatively, and note we down his comments on men and women.

He has journeyed up to court from La Trappe, which has fallen into confusion and quarrels, to which the most saintly precincts are peculiarly liable.

The history of Mademoiselle de la Vallière was not, as he tells us, of his time. He hears of her death, and so indeed does the king, with emotion. She expired in 1710, in the

Rue St. Jacques, at the Carmelite convent, where, though she was in the heart of Paris, her seclusion from the world had long been complete. Amongst the nuns of the convent none was so humble, so penitent, so chastened as this once lovely Louise de la Vallière, now, during a weary term of thirty-five years, 'Marie de la Miséricorde.' She had fled from the scene of her fall at one-and-thirty years of age. Twice had she taken refuge among the 'blameless vestals,' whom she envied as the broken-spirited envy the passive. First, she escaped from the torture of witnessing the king's passion for Madame de Montespan, by hiding herself among the Benedictine sisters at St. Cloud. Thence the king fetched her in person, threatening to order the cloister to be burnt. Next, Lauzun, by the command of Louis, sought her, and brought her *avec main forte*. The next time she fled no more; but took a public farewell of all she had too fondly loved, and throwing herself at the feet of the queen, humbly entreated her pardon. Never since that voluntary sepulture had she ceased, during those long and weary years, to lament—as the heart-stricken can alone lament—her sins. In deep contrition she learned the death of her son by the king, and bent her head meekly beneath the chastisement.

Three years before her death the triumphant Athénée de Montespan had breathed her last at Bourbon. If Louis XIV. had nothing else to repent of, the remorse of these two women ought to have wrung his heart. Athénée de Montespan was a youthful, innocent beauty, fresh from the seclusion of provincial life, when she attracted the blighting regards of royalty. A *fête* was to be given; she saw, she heard that she was its object. She entreated her husband to take her back to his estate in Guyenne, and to leave her there till the king had forgotten her. Her husband, in fatal confidence, trusted her resistance, and refused her petition. It was a life-long sorrow; and he soon found his mistake.

He lived and died passionately attached to his wife, but never saw her after her fall.

When she retired from court, to make room for the empire of the subtle De Maintenon, it was her son, the Duc de Maine, who induced her, not from love, but from ambition, to withdraw. She preserved, even in her seclusion in the country, the style of a queen, which she had assumed. Even her natural children by the king were never allowed to sit in her presence, on a *fauteuil*, but were only permitted to have small chairs. Every one went to pay her court, and she spoke to them as if doing them an honour; neither did she ever return a visit, even from the royal family. Her fatal beauty endured to the last: nothing could exceed her grace, her tact, her good sense in conversation, her kindness to every one.

But it was long before her restless spirit could find real peace. She threw herself on the guidance of the Abbé de la Tour; for the dread of death was ever upon her. He suggested a terrible test of her penitence. It was, that she should entreat her husband's pardon, and return to him. It was a fearful struggle with herself, for she was naturally haughty and high spirited; but she consented. After long agonies of hesitation, she wrote to the injured man. Her letter was couched in the most humble language; but it received no reply. The Marquis de Montespan, through a third person, intimated to her that he would neither receive her, nor see her, nor hear her name pronounced. At his death she wore widow's weeds; but never assumed his arms, nor adopted his liveries.

Henceforth, all she had was given to the poor. When Louis meanly cut down her pension, she sent word that she was sorry for the poor, not for herself; they would be the losers. She then humbled herself to the very dust: wore the hardest cloth next her fair skin; had iron bracelets; and an iron girdle, which made wounds on her body. Moreover, she

punished the most unruly members of her frame: she kept her tongue in bounds; she ceased to slander; she learned to bless. The fear of death still haunted her; she lay in bed with every curtain drawn, the room lighted up with wax candles; whilst she hired watchers to sit up all night, and insisted that they should never cease talking or laughing, lest, when she woke, the fear of *death* might come over her affrighted spirit.

She died at last after a few hours' illness, having just time to order all her household to be summoned, and before them to make a public confession of her sins. As she lay expiring, blessing God that she died far away from the children of her adulterous connection, the Comte d'Antin, her only child by the Marquis de Montespan, arrived. Peace and trust had then come at last to the agonized woman. She spoke to him about her state of mind, and expired.

To Madame de Maintenon the event would, it was thought, be a relief: yet she wept bitterly on hearing of it. The king showed, on the contrary, the utmost indifference, on learning that one whom he had once loved so much was gone for ever.

All has passed away! The *Œil de Bœuf* is now important only as being pointed out to strangers; Versailles is a show-place, not a habitation. Saint-Simon, who lived until 1775, was truly said to have turned his back on the new age, and to live in the memories of a former world of wit and fashion. He survived until the era of the 'Encyclopédia' of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He lived, indeed, to hear that Montesquieu was no more. How the spirit of Louis XIV. spoke in his contemptuous remarks on Voltaire, whom he would only call Arouet: 'The son of my father's and my own notary.'

At length, after attaining his eightieth year, the chronicler, who knew the weaknesses, the vices, the peculiarities of mankind, even to a hair's breadth, expired; having long given up

the court and occupied himself, whilst secluded in his country seat, solely with the revising and amplification of his wonderful Memoirs.

No works, it has been remarked, since those of Sir Walter Scott, have excited so much sensation as the Memoirs of his own time, by the soldier, ambassador, and *Trappist*, Duc de Saint-Simon.

END OF VOL. I.

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